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ABSTRACT

In the context of Goal 4, of the Illinois Commitment, increasing access to education and student diversity, the Committee of Access and Diversity of the Illinois Board of Higher Education conducted hearings, organized focus groups, and consulted with state and national experts to study access and diversity issues. At 5 hearings 90 individuals presented nearly 13 hours of testimony, and another 9 people submitted only written testimony. Three focus groups then explored student needs. Findings show that the proportion of people going to college has risen dramatically in Illinois. About 80% of high school graduates will take college courses at some time in their lives. Although there have been increases in the rate of college participation, enrollment has remained relatively stable because of a decline in the college-age population. As more baby boomer children reach college age and more adults return to college, enrollment at Illinois colleges and universities will rise. Substantial barriers still limit access and success. These are related to precollege preparation, student costs, accessibility of resources and services, and limited English literacy. Some major policy goals are outlined: (1) expand the scope of policies and mechanisms that address access needs; (2) address the access needs of all students more fully; (3) evaluate and demonstrate how diversity promotes learning in higher education; (4) strengthen statewide efforts to support institutional diversity; and (5) expand outreach efforts to precollegiate students to promote diversity. (Contains 6 tables and 51 references.) (SLD)

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ED 451 758

# GATEWAY TO SUCCESS: RETHINKING ACCESS AND DIVERSITY FOR A NEW CENTURY

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

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**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Major Findings

### *Access*

*The "Quiet Revolution" in College Participation*
In recent years, the proportion of persons going to college has risen dramatically. . . crease in college participation has occurred not only among the young but also among adults and persons of all race/ethnic groups. In Illinois, the number of high school graduates proceeding directly to college increased from 42 percent in 1986 to 63 percent in 1997. About 80 percent of high school graduates will take college courses at some time in their lives.

Despite increases in the rate of college participation, enrollments in the past decade have remained relatively stable because of a decline in the college-age population. Now, as more baby boomer children come of college age and more adults return to college, enrollment at Illinois colleges and universities will rise. The state must prepare to meet the demands of this "quiet revolution" and a student population whose characteristics and needs differ markedly from students of previous eras.

*Barriers Hindering Student Progress and Success*
Despite the growing importance of higher education in our society and the growing demand for a college education, substantial barriers limit access and success. These include:

- *Pre-Collegiate Preparation*
  Students' academic preparation in high school has failed to keep up with their college ambitions. High school academic preparation lags behind college expectations. Illinois is the lowest ranking state in the Midwest in the proportion of its students taking core academic courses.
- *Student Costs*
  In the past decade, college affordability has worsened for many students despite substantial financial aid growth. Tuition increases have exceeded the rate of growth in inflation and disposable income. Non-degree completers have been most affected by higher costs. Graduates have been able to pay off rising loan debt with better paying jobs as the rate of return from a college education grows. Among the neediest students are those enrolled less than half time and poor students with limited financial resources.
- *Accessibility of Resources and Services*
  1. More persons with disabilities are going to college. While higher education institutions have improved accessibility and services for students with disabilities, the student attrition of this population is too high and new problems are emerging, such as ensuring access to technology-based instruction.
  2. Unless efforts to provide technology-based instruction are more broadly cast, Illinois colleges and universities run the risk of establishing a new set of barriers for those who are already underrepresented in higher education.
- *English Literacy*
  English literacy is a hidden access barrier. The number of Illinois citizens with limited-English proficiency has increased markedly due to rising immigration.

### *The Right Kind of Access*

Too many students drop out of college without achieving their educational goals. A greater proportion of the student enrollment is at risk academically because more high school graduates and more adults with competing personal and work responsibilities are enrolling in college. A growing number of students also attend multiple institutions during the course of their education suggesting that problems of degree completion and time to degree may worsen in future years.

### *Diversity*

*Importance of Diversity*

Diversity has intrinsic importance for higher education since students learn by interacting with persons who have different backgrounds and perspectives. Such experiences create ties and bonds and produce understanding of others needs through which diversity becomes a positive rather than a divisive force within our society. Illinois residents place a high priority upon a college education which can impart to students an "ability to get along with people different from themselves." Diverse educational settings are more intellectually stimulating and produce long-term benefits for all students. Recent findings cited in this report demonstrate that:

- A majority of all faculty and students believe that racial/ethnic diversity promotes positive cognitive and personal development.
- Many companies see racial/ethnic diversity among their workforce as a "corporate advantage" and seek to employ graduates with experience in diverse settings.
- Racial/ethnic diversity produces graduates who are more active citizens, more involved in community affairs, and participate more in interracial volunteer activities.

## Major Recommendations

**Policy Goal #1: Expand the Scope of Policies and Mechanisms that Address Access Needs**

Illinois, historically, has relied on its nationally recognized financial aid programs and community college system as primary access mechanisms. This report seeks to build upon these investments while developing other access tools.

*Improving Pre-collegiate Preparation and School to College Transition*

In light of the fact that about two-thirds of all high school graduates now directly go on to college and 80 percent of high school graduates will enroll in college courses at some time in their lives, students should be better prepared for college and the transition from high school to college should be made smoother and less disruptive. The Board of Higher Education will seek legislation that would require all high school students to complete a pre-college curriculum in order to properly prepare for work and college. In addition, the Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the State Board of Education should work together to:

- Align high school curricula and graduation standards with higher education admissions requirements and learning expectations.

- Develop assessment and communication tools to inform students how well they are progressing in preparing for college.
- Create "college-like" courses for high school students that remedy academic deficiencies and model college level skills.
- Create an annual "Report on Readiness for College or Work" to inform the public about the academic skills of high school graduates and college freshmen.

*Expanding Commitments to Off-Campus Instruction*

- Public Universities. Place a high priority upon baccalaureate degree completion programs and programs that address the needs of diverse populations in the development of technology-based instruction.
- Community Colleges. Expand responsibilities for broadening resident access to computers and technology-based instruction. Provide information to local residents about educational opportunities at all degree levels.
- Board of Higher Education. Undertake needs analysis and provide information to colleges and universities that will facilitate the development of technology-based programs.
- The Illinois Century Network. Work with state agencies and Illinois colleges and universities to broaden access to computers and technology-based instruction.

*Providing the Right Kind of Access*

- Consumer Information System. Establish a Web-based system that promotes access, as well as consumer protection. The system should provide information about institutional programs and services, as well as address the needs of underrepresented students.
- Model Programs. Support the development of model programs that seek to reduce the attrition of first-year students, especially those groups of students who have lower rates of degree completion.
- Principles of Effectiveness. Establish and disseminate a set of principles that describe the academic practices and services that have proven effective in reducing the first-year attrition of student groups with lower completion rates.

*Extending the Reach of Student Financial Aid*

- Extend Illinois Incentive for Access eligibility to more needy, first-year students.
- Extend Monetary Award Program eligibility to students enrolled less than half time.

**Policy Goal #2: More Fully Address the Access Needs of All Students**

Recommendations address the needs of many student populations such as poor students, minority students, adult students, students in underserved areas, and underprepared students. With this report, the Committee asks the Board to begin a process of more actively addressing the needs of two often overlooked groups, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. The report focuses, in particular, on the potential benefits and risks that educational technology presents to these populations.

Among other measures, the Committee supports the passage of legislation that would require publishers of textbooks to make their products available in electronic format, as well as ensure that technology-based courses are available to students with disabilities. The report also

recommends exploring how technology-based instruction can best be used to strengthen the professional development of English as a Second Language instructors.

**Policy Goal #3: Evaluate and Demonstrate How Diversity Promotes Learning in Higher Education Programs**

Existing federal law supports higher education's long-standing practice of promoting campus diversity. However, the strict legal reasoning of recent federal court cases has sometimes found institutions in violation of the law when they could not produce evidence about how diverse academic programs foster student learning. Courts have also ruled against admissions practices that set aside a number of seats for a targeted group of minority applicants.

In the current unsettled legal environment, the Committee recommends that Illinois colleges and universities adopt processes that demonstrate the benefits of student diversity and incorporate efforts to enhance diversity into academic evaluation processes. Colleges and universities should report on the results of these assessments in their Annual Report on Underrepresented Groups.

**Policy Goal #4: Strengthen Statewide Efforts to Support Institutional Diversity**

Higher education has come to rely heavily upon standardized admissions tests and high school class rank for undergraduate admissions. The Committee encourages colleges and universities to use other relevant criteria. The Board of Higher Education will work with Illinois colleges and universities to identify and develop mechanisms that can be used to support more individualized admissions review. The Board will also identify any additional costs that may be required to support changes in institutional admissions practices.

The Committee proposes creation of a Diversity Grants Program. Since diversity is lowest at the graduate level, the Committee proposes targeting most diversity aid to graduate/professional education. The Committee proposes combining and expanding existing graduate programs serving minority students and making them one component of a new Diversity Grant Program, now to include women, especially in engineering, computer science, and science programs, and students with disabilities. The Committee also recommends establishing an undergraduate component for fields such as information technology where diversity is low both on campus and in the work force.

**Policy Goal #5: Expand Outreach Efforts to Pre-collegiate Students to Promote Diversity**

The Committee proposes that colleges and universities should expand the recruitment of minority students by making use of new information from the Prairie State Exam.

The Committee recommends that the Board of Higher Education partner with private organizations that have successfully increased the academic achievement and college-going rates of disadvantaged students. Private non-profit programs work because of their intense personal commitment to the students that they serve. Such programs have something to offer that public institutions and agencies may find hard to duplicate but which these state entities can support and possibly help expand. The Board of Higher Education should bring together public and private entities to identify ways to carry out such cooperation. It is recommended that a grant program be established to facilitate such public/private partnerships.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# GATEWAY TO SUCCESS: RETHINKING ACCESS AND DIVERSITY FOR A NEW CENTURY

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

April 2001

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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# PREFACE

In February 1999, the Board of Higher Education approved a new statewide agenda entitled the *Illinois Commitment.* Established after a year-long dialogue among higher education institutions and outside constituencies, this essential document articulates six basic goals that Illinois higher education pledges to achieve in the coming years. To begin implementation, in spring 1999 the Board convened a new committee to examine Goal #4 of the *Illinois Commitment* which reads "Illinois will increase the number and diversity of citizens completing training and education programs."

For this study, the Committee on Access and Diversity has conducted hearings, organized focus groups, and consulted with state and national experts. In January 2000, five hearings were held throughout the state at which 90 individuals presented nearly 13 hours of oral testimony. Another nine persons submitted only written testimony. Copies of written testimony are available from Board offices.

Following the hearings, the Committee formed three focus groups to consider the circumstances of financially needy students, students with disabilities, and minority students. The April 2000 Board item, *Committee on Access and Diversity: Update on Hearings and Focus Group Meetings,* describes these sessions.

The Committee thanks the hundreds of individuals who took the time and effort to advise us on our study. Regrettably, we cannot mention each person by name. We acknowledge, in particular, Martin Michaelson of Hogan and Hartson in Washington, D.C. and Arthur Coleman of Nixon Peabody LLP in Washington D.C. for their advice on the topic of diversity; Tom Flint and Ruth Frey of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for their counsel on the educational needs of adult and non-traditional students; and Paul Lingenfelter, director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, for his many helpful comments and suggestions.

## INTRODUCTION

The state of Illinois has always placed a high priority upon access to higher education. Whether it has been the young farmer or businessman searching for a more practical education in the post Civil War period, returning veterans after World War II, or baby boomers in the 1960s and 1970s, the state has responded by establishing new institutions, programs, and other mechanisms to provide the education that was sought. Today, that challenge continues.

The current demand for access differs in both scale and character from previous eras. More people of all ages and from all groups aspire to go to college. Moreover, in the past decade, a dramatic growth has occurred in college participation, especially among high school graduates. For example, from 1986 to 1997 the number of Illinois high school graduates proceeding directly to college rose from 42 to 63 percent.

Historically, access to college enhanced opportunity and improved one's chance to secure a job with higher pay and responsibility. Today, the demand for higher education has a new intensity. In this environment, higher education has become a necessity rather than an advantage, and the prospects for those without some post-secondary education have greatly diminished.

Until now, the revolution in college-going behavior and expectations has attracted little attention being masked by demographic factors. At the same time that a greater portion of the population decided to attend college, the number of young adults declined. As a result, enrollment in Illinois has remained stable during the past two decades notwithstanding increased college participation. Now, however, the children of the baby boomers, or Generation Y, are graduating from high school in increasing numbers and enrollments should rise substantially over the next ten to twenty years.

Illinois higher education must expand access opportunities to meet the demands of the "quiet revolution". The state of Illinois has made an immeasurable investment in higher education, and its quality must be protected and assured. However, a college education should not be a rationed good. Our colleges and universities should open their doors to all who seek, and can benefit from, the experience.

The current demand for access is unique in its diversity. Previous periods of high demand resulted from demographic changes among sub-populations, such as traditional, middle class students in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, however, students of all ages and race/ethnic groups are enrolling in college at higher rates. Meeting their needs will require more broad-based strategies that go beyond traditional approaches. The report suggests that the starting point for this effort is pre-collegiate preparation, perhaps the greatest barrier to college access.

As the population seeking a higher education grows, implications arise for student success. More students at academic risk are likely to enter our colleges and universities in the coming years. This will occur not only because of the larger pool of high school graduates

going to college but also because of the influx of first-generation students, who commonly have more difficulty in adapting to college life, and the increased enrollment of working adults, whose busy lives do not easily accommodate course schedules. The report suggests that students must receive "the right kind of access" if they are to achieve their educational goals. It proposes a number of recommendations that would help these students—particularly those with historically higher rates of attrition—make more informed choices about higher education and would better support them in their critical first year of education.

*"There is no other topic about which the Committee feels more strongly than ensuring diversity in higher education."*

*The recommendations in this report will advance college access. They will also enhance student diversity within our state's colleges and universities.* There is no other topic about which the Committee feels more strongly than ensuring diversity in higher education. It is through the interchange of people with different backgrounds, talents, ideas, and perspectives that meaningful learning and personal development occurs. This is the reason that higher education institutions have long sought to admit diverse students.

Today, diversity in higher education means many things, but certainly it means preparing students to work and live with persons from different racial and ethnic groups. Research shows that students educated in diverse learning environments realize many educational benefits and become more effective employees and active citizens. The importance of race/ethnic diversity is recognized under existing law and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case. The principles 1of this case need to be supported and closely adhered to by Illinois higher education even as we seek additional avenues to promote diversity.

The Committee proposes enhancing diversity by strengthening admissions and financial aid programs and expanding outreach to disadvantaged pre-collegiate students. The Committee believes it would be a mistake for the state to become narrowly prescriptive about undergraduate admissions and does not support the adoption of a uniform statewide admissions criterion for all public universities, as some states have recently implemented. Instead, the Committee encourages colleges and universities to establish multiple admissions criteria that recognize the relevance of many academic and personal characteristics and that will require the closer scrutiny of more student applications. Efforts to support diversity should not be narrowly confined to any one group but should be broadly focused and should concentrate on areas where student diversity is low. Efforts to improve female representation, for example, should focus upon graduate programs in select fields such as computer science, engineering, and physical science.

## CHAPTER I

# THE "QUIET REVOLUTION": COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN ILLINOIS

*A "quiet revolution" is now occurring across the state of Illinois and our nation with more people of all ages and racial/ethnic groups going to college. As in other revolutions, the changes are widespread and the implications profound, reshaping individual lives and the fabric of our society. This phenomenon, as shown below, has fundamental implications for the access and development needs of our citizens.*

### Changes in Expectation and Behavior

Since the end of World War II and the creation of the G.I. Bill, the proportion of individuals going to college has risen. Perhaps surprisingly, in the years of greatest enrollment growth, the 1960s and 1970s, the college-going rate rose only slightly. At this time, the size of the demographic population of college age students and not the rate of student participation was responsible for enrollment growth. Since the mid-1980s, however, the percentage of the population going to college has greatly accelerated. It is not an exaggeration to say that our society has "tipped" in attitudes toward college and a college degree now represents what a high school diploma meant for previous generations.

Evidence accumulates on the growing importance of higher education. Beyond our shores in Europe and Asia, nations are dedicating a greater share of their budgets to higher education as part of their economic development plans. Norway, Britain, and the Netherlands now lead the United States in the percent of their population graduating from college. Within the United States, the roles and the features of higher education have become more complex as new types of institutions are created, often with venture capital, to exploit the potential of educational technology and reach an expanding adult market.

**What a Difference a Decade Makes**

- **In 1986, 42 percent of Illinois high school graduates went directly to college.**
- **In 1997, 63 percent of Illinois high school graduates went directly to college.**

In this environment, it is not surprising that more individuals seek a college education. There are many reasons for this trend (see text box below). One compelling factor is that higher level skills add productivity and wealth for both the individual and the wider society in an office economy. For instance, a recent Board of Higher Education and University of Illinois study showed that an Illinois graduate earns, on the average, $207,600 more over a lifetime if he or she earns an associate degree. A bachelor's degree brings $590,600 and a professional degree $1,839,100 more than the high school diploma. The study also demonstrated the non-economic benefits derived from college experience; for example,

college graduates are healthier, commit less crime, and participate more fully in community life.

Another reason for college's growing popularity lies in the changing nature of higher education itself. College today offers a wide range of technical and professional courses and programs, in addition to traditional academic offerings. The growth of community colleges, in particular, has transformed higher education's ability to meet workforce and career needs and increased the relevance of higher education for working adults.

A body of recent research provides essential details about the "quiet revolution". Studies show that few students expect to end their education with high school graduation. For instance, the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) has found that "97 percent of high school graduates expect to continue their education beyond high school and 71 percent expect to earn a B.A./B.S. degree."

Students are acting upon these higher expectations. From 1986 to 1997, the number of high school graduates from the state of Illinois proceeding directly to college increased from 42 percent to 63 percent. This measure of college participation does not capture students who delay their post-secondary education. The National Center of Educational Statistics in *Access to Post-secondary Education for the 1992 High School Graduates* has reported that by the age of 20 three quarters of high school graduates enroll at a college or university. Another study by Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service suggests that about 80 percent of the nation's population will eventually undertake education or training at the post-secondary level at some time in their lives.

### Why Are More People Going to College?

There are many reasons why more students are going to college. One explanation: an expanding array of academic, technical, and vocational programs offered on and off-campus and the availability of financial aid have made higher education more relevant and easier to attend. Another reason is demographic: parents today are better educated, richer, and have fewer children than their predecessors, all factors that influence college participation.

College graduates earn more. The college wage premium has risen steadily for more than two decades. Today, college graduates earn about 50 percent more over their lifetimes than high school graduates. In contrast, in the 1970s the college premium was worth about 20 percent. There are fewer good jobs for high school graduates, jobs that offer benefits, some security, and career prospects.

The fact that more students are going to college while the rate of return of a college education is rising rapidly may seem a paradox conflicting the laws of supply and demand. The explanation lies in the changing nature of the post-industrial economy. The decline in the number of factory jobs, the greater use of technology in all occupations, and the rise of the office economy, in particular, have fueled demand for the greater skills and knowledge offered by workers with college degrees.

Persons of all ages and groups are part of the "quiet revolution". Working adults are returning in greater numbers either to complete a bachelor's degree, begin graduate education, or, increasingly, take a course or courses to improve career prospects. Students over the age of 40 are another expanding source of enrollment. The special needs of these students affect

not only if they participate in education and training, but also how and where they participate, as noted by a 1996 report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Minority participation in higher education also has grown, and pre-collegiate Black and Hispanic students have rising expectations, as pointed out below. For example, across the nation the percentage of Blacks 18 to 24 years of age enrolled in college grew from 28 percent in 1982 to 35 percent in 1995, according to the United States Census. Hispanic participation nationally increased from 29 percent to 35 percent. Despite this growth, the gap between minority and white participation rose from 33 percent to 44 percent during this period.

Perhaps the youngest students most exemplify the changing attitudes toward college going. A recent *New York Times* survey and interviews of sixth graders from throughout the United States concluded that "higher education has become a preoccupation for children even before they reach puberty....[O]ne new chain of thought that runs nearly unbroken through today's sixth-grade classrooms is the belief that a college degree....comes with a pass key to the good life." The article found all types of sixth graders held such beliefs irrespective of class and racial/ethnicity.

### What Adults Are Saying to Students About College

During the past two decades, there has been a significant change in what parents and teachers are saying to young people about going to college. A 1990 NCES study, for instance, showed that two thirds of all high school sophomores were advised by their teachers and guidance counselors to go to college. In contrast, a decade before in 1980 only one third of high school sophomores had been counseled to take this path. Perhaps most surprisingly, 60 percent of sophomores testing in the lowest quartile in 1990 were advised to attend.

In Illinois, a survey this past year by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) of parents of sixth graders showed that respondents had high hopes for their children. The survey indicated that 95 percent of parents expect their sixth grader to continue their education beyond high school, and 78 percent expect their child to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher. ISAC reported that socioeconomic factors "seemed to have little impact on these expectations."

A recent scholarly work by University of Chicago professors Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation: American's Teenagers, Motivated but Directionless,* documents that there has been a "dramatic" increase in the number of middle school and high school students who plan to attend college, a trend which has occurred among both adolescent boys and girls, as well as those from different racial and ethnic groups. Unfortunately, as discussed below, Schneider and Stevenson also found that many adolescents have not changed their educational programs as they have elevated their career goals.

In Illinois and the United States, more teachers and parents are advising young people to go to college (see text box above). Such advice is broad-based and no longer reflects primarily the hopes of an aspiring elite class. Stated differently, college is no longer seen as a place preparing a small group of leaders, but as offering skills and knowledge that all individuals need to compete in the marketplace. Many parents feel without such skills their children would be left behind in an economy increasingly driven by technological change.

Recent surveys indicate that the general population agrees that most young people require education beyond high school. For instance, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education conducted surveys this past year which found that "eighty-seven percent of Americans [and 87 percent of Illinoisans] believe that a college education has become as important as a high school diploma used to be....Higher education is increasingly seen as essential for economic mobility, and the focus is not just on the credential but on the personal growth, skills and perspective that students take away from a college education. At the same time, people see a highly educated population necessary for both economic prosperity and social well-being."

Despite much progress, significant disparities exist within our population in rates of college participation. As noted above, minority participation rates still trail significantly those of whites. Also, rates of participation continue to vary by level of parental income, although more lower-income students are going to college. For example, nationally, about one half of students from low-income families go directly to college from high school. In contrast, about 80 percent of students from high-income families go directly on.

## Enrollment Implications

The paradox of the "quiet revolution" is that the number of enrollments have increased little during this time of rising college participation. During the past two decades, for example, total enrollment at Illinois institutions of higher education grew by three percent. Growth failed to occur because of a decline in higher education's core market, young adults from ages 18 to 24. From 1986 to 1992, for instance, the number of Illinois high school graduates dropped by 15 percent. Now, however, as this age group swells and Generation Y, the children of the baby boomers, goes to college, enrollment is expected to rise.

A broader distribution of the population going to college has changed the demographic composition of student enrollment. There are now more minority students, women, and older students, as well as high school graduates with more varied socio-economic backgrounds and academic abilities. One defining statistic: *less than 20 percent of all college students nationally now fit the strict definition of a so-called "traditional college student," that is, a residential student 18 to 24 years of age who attends full-time.* The new majority student often has educational objectives that differ from those of the traditional student. Many, for instance, are more interested in acquiring knowledge and skills than in completing a degree program.

Will students continue to go to college in the record rates of the past decade? Indeed, could rates of participation climb even higher? A reversal of the current trend is unlikely as economic and demographic factors exert a strong upward influence on college attendance patterns. Some countervailing forces, however, may limit future enrollment growth. For instance, the greater numbers of students in the Generation Y cohort could reduce the college wage premium, as could improvements in secondary education and the value of a high school diploma. Also, significant tuition increases or restrictions on financial aid and rates of minority participation could influence overall enrollment levels. As discussed below, minority students will represent a greater proportion of the state's population in the future. If

minority rates of college participation remain low, future enrollment increases will be less than projected.

Table 1 presents a projection of increases in enrollment at Illinois colleges and universities from 1998 to 2020. The projections reflect different assumptions about college-going rates. To produce these estimates, different rates of participation during the 1990s were used for nine age cohorts (that is, the low, medium, and high rate of each cohort) and these rates were applied against United States Census population projections to produce enrollment estimates for the next 20 years. As shown, the projected enrollment growth ranges from 49,919 to 86,085 by 2010 and from 77,589 to 115,324 by 2020. These projections amount to a total enrollment increase for Illinois higher education ranging from 7 to 12 percent by 2010 and from 11 to 16 percent by 2020.

**Table 1**

**Illinois Higher Education: Projected Enrollment Growth At Varying Participation Rates, 1998 to 2020**

| | Low | | Middle | | High | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Change | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1998 to 2010 | 49,919 | 7% | 58,472 | 8% | 86,085 | 12% |
| 2010 to 2020 | 27,670 | 4% | 28,273 | 4% | 29,239 | 4% |
| 1998 to 2020 | 77,589 | 11% | 86,745 | 12% | 115,324 | 16% |

According to one recent study by Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service, *Crossing the Great Divide: Can We Achieve Equity When Generation Y Goes to College?* Illinois will be one of nine states in the nation that can expect modest enrollment growth in the next 15 years. Illinois will not experience the flood of new students expected in some states such as California and Texas. However, the upward swing in enrollment will place pressure on higher education resources.

## Summary

A "quiet revolution" has occurred in the expectations and behavior of Illinoisans toward college going. As expectations and enrollments grow, a central challenge for Illinois higher education forms: to reshape the capacity and capabilities of our institutions and programs to meet a greater variety of needs. To achieve quality, the state of Illinois must respond to the "quiet revolution" in a way that places a premium on institutional efficiency and flexibility, as well as gains in student learning.

## CHAPTER II

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACCESS

*As our society becomes more dependent upon higher level knowledge and skills, college demand grows. To provide higher education to a larger share of our population, we must understand how to overcome barriers to access. In the last thirty years, Illinois has constructed preeminent community college and financial aid systems that have broadened the base of college participation. Yet, not all barriers of cost and distance have been surmounted. Equally important, other barriers, perhaps less recognized but no less real, prevent many persons from achieving their educational and career goals. The most formidable of these barriers is pre-collegiate preparation.*

### Academic Preparation Before College

There is no greater barrier to access to college and college success than poor academic preparation. In the words of David Ellwood and Thomas Kane, "the single most powerful determinant of college going remains high school achievement." Given this reality, an increasing number of opinion leaders have argued for a more aggressive approach to improving pre-collegiate student preparation. For instance, the College Board's study, *Financial Aid Is Not Enough,* stated the following:

> *"[T]he most important step is taking the right courses. Financial aid is not enough. Research has repeatedly shown that students who take rigorous, progressively more challenging coursework are far more likely to plan for and enroll in college. In his analysis of the Department of Education's longitudinal data on high school senior cohorts, Clifford Adelman says the answer to who finishes bachelor's degrees and why is always the same: those 'who were best prepared, regardless of race, regardless of financial aid'."*

The lack of proper preparation in the elementary and high school years was a theme that repeatedly arose in the Committee's hearings and focus group sessions. Parents and educators stressed that minority students, in particular, too often received poor academic preparation and entered college at risk. Minority parents were especially concerned about the quality of high school counseling. Many students, it was said, were not encouraged to go to college and were not given good advice about the educational opportunities at Illinois colleges and universities.

**Minority Preparation and College Success**

A recent study by Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box,* examines the factors most responsible for college degree completion for all types of students. Among Adelman's conclusions: *"the impact of a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality on degree completion is far more pronounced—and positively—for African-American and Latino students than any other pre-college indicator of academic resources. The impact for African-American and Latino students is also much greater than it is for white students".*

Many entering students are not ready for college. Although more students are taking college preparatory courses in high school, only about half of students in Illinois taking the ACT, most of whom are college bound, complete the college preparatory "core", that is, four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social science. Also troubling is evidence of increasing student "disengagement" in high school. A thirty year study of the characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes of college freshmen by the Higher Education Research Institute notes upward trends in grades, academic expectations, postgraduate aspirations, college applications, and college preparatory course taking, but downward trends in time spent on homework, absenteeism, and interest in high school courses.

Why students' rising interest in college has not generated a corresponding increase in their pre-collegiate preparation is a central concern in Schneider and Stevenson's book, *The Ambitious Generation.* Based on extensive interviews and a longitudinal data base from the 1950s that includes 7,000 adolescents, Schneider and Stevenson have concluded:

> *"[most] high school students ...have high ambitions but no clear life plans for reaching them. We describe these adolescents as having misaligned ambitions. These 'drifting dreamers' have limited knowledge about their chosen occupations, about educational requirements, or about future demand for these occupations. Without such information, their life plans are not realistic and are often ill formed. Drifting dreamers are found among boys and girls and all racial and ethnic groups."*

The result of this lack of planning and preparation during elementary and high school years is predictable: students require remedial education and are more likely to drop or stop out during college. Remediation entails considerable personal and institutional cost. For instance, the Illinois Community College Board has estimated that the state's community colleges expended $75 million in 1999 on remediation. The number of students requiring remediation is also increasing. For instance, between 1991 and 1996 the number of community college students taking one remediation class increased from 11.5 to 14.1 percent.

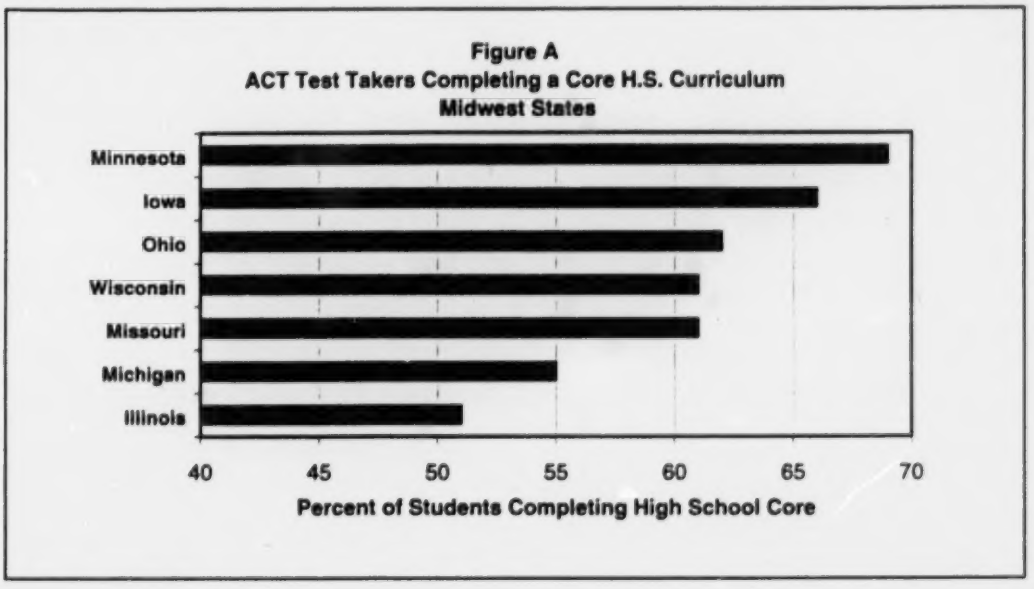
How does the state of Illinois compare with other states in terms of student pre-collegiate preparation? Some Illinois students, it is clear, are among the best prepared in the nation. The ability of the state's high-achieving students was an important factor in Illinois receiving an *A* grade on pre-collegiate preparation from the National Center of Public Policy in Higher Education in the recent report, *Measuring Up: 2000.* A close look at the report indicates, however, that the Center lacked important information about pre-collegiate preparation in Illinois. Moreover, other comparative indicators, such as the percent of ACT test takers taking the college core and

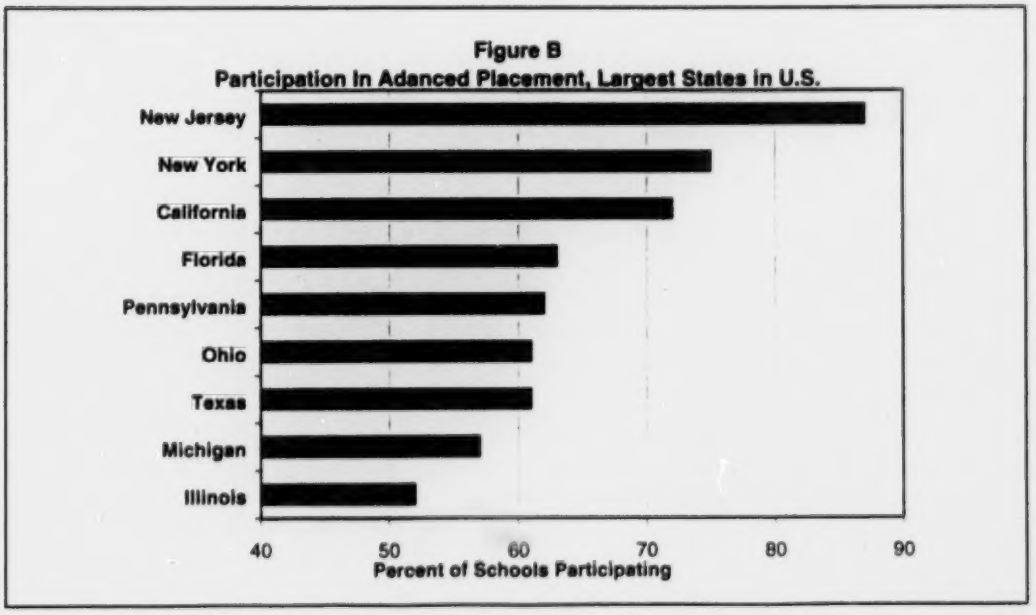
**Illinois' P-16 Initiative**

In recent years, the State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Board of Higher Education have undertaken initiatives to strengthen and coordinate Illinois' P-16 educational system. As described in their 1999 publication, *P-16 Partnership for Educational Excellence*, this initiative has placed priority upon three types of activities: pre-collegiate student preparation, teacher education, and technology-based instruction. These agencies have also established the Illinois Virtual High School to expand educational opportunities, especially Advanced Placement coursework, for high school students.

participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) program, provide reason for concern about the level of pre-collegiate preparation among some Illinois high school students.

The figures below offer additional information on pre-collegiate preparation. Figure A shows that fewer Illinois students take the core than in other Midwest states. The fact that Illinois has the lowest number of required core courses for high school graduation among these states partially explains the poor performance. Figure B shows that a lower percentage of high schools participate in the AP program than in other major states. Positively, the number of Illinois students taking the AP exam has grown rapidly in recent years, and Illinois has the highest AP score in the nation among public high school seniors.



The Committee on Access and Diversity believes that there are few issues more important to our society than improving the academic preparation of the state's elementary and high school students. As more students go to college, this issue takes on greater urgency. Unless high school graduates are "college ready", it is hard to be sanguine about their post-secondary future. In response to this situation, higher education admissions could become more restrictive. At this time, however, the Committee prefers to support more proactive efforts to enhance student preparation.

Given the nature of work in today's society, the Committee believes that all high school students should complete a pre-collegiate curriculum. Moreover, students should have mastery over this material before they graduate from high school. High school is now defined, first and foremost, by the fact that it takes four years. This must change. Students not ready for college or work after four years of high school should have an extra year to prepare. Conversely, qualified students who complete three years of high school, and wish to go to college, should have the opportunity to do so. The school should conform to the students, not the other way around.

*The abrupt transition between elementary/secondary education and higher education is an artifact from a time when few students sought a college degree.*

Effective pre-collegiate preparation starts from the realization that young people today require extensive knowledge, as well as critical thinking, communication, and technical skills, to ensure their future success. An effective educational institution is one that prepares students so that they have the information and skills needed to enter the work force or go to college. To acquire such knowledge and skills, students and teachers, particularly at the high school level, must understand how student academic achievement measures up not only at the course and grade level but also for college.

Through the adoption of the Illinois Learning Standards and the Prairie State Exam, the state of Illinois has created the building blocks needed for a strong, flexible P-16 educational system. The Prairie State Exam will provide a comprehensive assessment of the academic skills of all high school students during the junior year. The assessment will include the ACT which all juniors will take. Through this new exam, as well as related assessment and communication mechanisms, yet to be developed, students, teachers, parents, and educators will have a better idea about how well reading, writing, and mathematical knowledge and skills prepare students for success. With such knowledge, instruction can be shaped and re-invigorated to respond to student needs.

To complement the State Board of Education's innovations other systemic changes are needed. First, high school curriculum and graduation requirements should be fully aligned with public university learning expectations and admissions standards so that all students are prepared to succeed in college or work. Second, students must have access to courses and curricula that enable them to effectively build their knowledge and skills. To provide such access, high schools must offer more academic core courses and introduce greater academic rigor into all courses, working with higher education in this effort. Such improvements should not only seek to increase the enrollment of students doing college level work, although

such growth is needed, but should also provide "college-like courses" by which students can remedy deficiencies identified in the Prairie State Exam and improve their critical thinking. Finally, efforts should be made to strengthen the education and preparation of elementary/secondary teachers as well as the quality of in-service instruction.

Making such changes will not be easy, but through systemic effort pre-collegiate academic preparation and achievement can be improved. How will state leaders and taxpayers know for sure that progress is being made? To provide such information, we propose the establishment of an annual "Report on Readiness for College or Work". This report would be developed by the Joint Education Committee and would provide information about the course-taking patterns and learning of high school students and graduates. The report would also contain information about the academic achievement of students in their first year of college, as reflected in levels of remediation, rates of attrition, and appropriate learning assessments.

The proposals outlined above focus, in particular, on better preparing students to make the transition from high school to college. While such efforts should produce significant improvement, they are most likely insufficient to affect a hard core student population whose academic skills are very low.

Changes in the educational performance of low achievers depend upon a redirection of their goals and motivation. The kind of personal transformation required is, in many respects, beyond the capability of institutions to achieve and can best be influenced by family members, community leaders, and friends. Nevertheless, our schools and colleges should search for opportunities to affect change in the lives of disadvantaged students. In recent years, many colleges and universities have developed mentoring programs for students in disadvantaged communities. We believe such programs have great promise and efforts should be made to expand and improve them. Another idea, proposed below, is to develop partnerships between higher education institutions and non-profit organizations, such as the I Have a Dream Foundation, that have proved particularly effective in preparing disadvantaged students for college.

## New Technologies and Barriers of Time and Distance

Older students and working adults seek an educational experience that their busy lives can accommodate. One tool that holds great promise for such students is technology-based instruction. In recent years, the state of Illinois has made sizeable investments in electronic infrastructure to deliver technology-based instruction (see text box). The Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the State Board of Education also have established incentives and other mechanisms to expand the number and quality of programs developed for electronic delivery (see text box). This report now turns to the issue of how Illinois higher education should best organize and structure itself to fully capitalize upon these investments.

## Setting Priorities

New technologies offer tremendous promise for enhancing access to higher education. Compared with older technology, like broadcast television, they feature the kind of teacher/student interaction that occurs in traditional classrooms and permit programs to be "customized" to meet specific educational objectives. Whether delivered over the state's interactive video network or asynchronously via the Internet, electronic courses can reach residents who previously could not attend classes on campus.

### Illinois Higher Education and the Internet

The Internet has stimulated the enrollment of adults and place-bound students. Through use of this medium, education coursework can enter the home and workplace and be available at the time of a student's choosing. In Illinois, the recently created Illinois Century Network will supply the electronic backbone and bandwidth necessary for the delivery of most education programs delivered via the Internet. Through the Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC), Illinois Community Colleges On-Line, and the Illinois Virtual High School students can access Web-based courses and programs offered by Illinois institutions. Students can find library material on line via the Illinois Digital Academic Library. In the past year, the On-Line Learning Council was created to share information and coordinate the activities of various Internet-based educational initiatives. In addition, the state of Illinois has established an interactive video network with over 400 interconnected class rooms that provides off-campus instruction for Illinois citizens.

While the promise of these technologies is real and their growth inevitable, substantial questions remain about their use and role within higher education. A considerable body of research shows "no substantive difference" in student learning when comparing classes delivered via instructional technology with those taught by traditional methods. However, such technologies bring new issues and problems—the higher drop-out rates in Internet courses, for example—that call for development of "model practices" to enhance student learning. It is time to get beyond rhetorical issues and take a closer look at the benefits and risks of these technologies.

Education is an industry characterized by tradition and continuity. It is particularly noteworthy, then, to see new types of educational institutions being formed to maximize the potential of new technologies. Providers now include the publisher Harcourt and Brace which offers degree programs over the Internet; Jones University, a virtual university accredited by North Central Association; and the Illinois-based Cardean University, which offers professional education in a practice-based learning format on the Internet. Partnerships are also being established, such as the Michigan Virtual Automotive College, which bring together educational institutions, Internet providers, and business corporations in a powerful merger of content, delivery, and non-traditional learner constituencies.

How should Illinois higher education proceed to develop instructional technologies in an increasingly dynamic and fluid environment? *One sensible solution is to strengthen components vital to the development and delivery of high quality off-campus programs.* Three critical components that need strengthening are:

The Role of New Technologies: Time for a Closer Look

*"[T]he analysis of new technologies of education needs to take a finer-grained view of which technologies have educational potential for which students, for which subject matters, and which purposes....Many important questions follow from this finer-grained analysis. What sorts of motivations work for different sorts of students (younger or older, full time or part time)? Online coursework may call for a greater degree of focus and self-direction than courses where the attention and approval of an immediately present teacher are available. Are there certain subject matters or aims that cannot be taught in a non-face-to-face context....It is easy to imagine alternative futures in which new technologies are incorporated in such a way as to exacerbate the lecture-oriented, fact-driven, impersonal modes of pedagogy that exist on many campuses already; or incorporated in such a way as to alleviate those constraints and create new, more innovative, educational possibilities."*

Nicholas C. Burbules and Thomas A. Callister, *The Promise and the Challenge of New Technologies.*

- *Curricula.* Recent needs analyses in Lake County and the Quad Cities show a strong demand for baccalaureate degree completion and master's degree programs. New baccalaureate completion programs offered by private institutions in association with community colleges are further evidence of this growing demand. In recent years, institutions have developed many Internet courses, but the number of degree programs lags. The Committee believes that technology-based programs should be developed in a wider array of fields and should serve the needs of students seeking certificates and higher education degrees.

- *Academic and Student Support Services.* A quality education provides access to instructional materials such as library books, periodicals, and digital data bases, as well as support services. Unfortunately, students studying at home or at work often find it difficult to obtain these resources. Off-campus programs must provide access to proper instructional materials and staff resources for academic planning, registration, and financial aid.

- *Faculty Development.* In recent years, faculty interest in educational technology has grown. Nevertheless, faculty ability to develop curricula for electronic programs and to teach such courses lags behind student interest and institutional expectations. Not all faculty need be facile with new instructional technologies. However, quality issues will arise unless faculty have greater opportunities to develop requisite skills.

## Expanding Institutional Commitments to Serve

In the dynamic and emerging new world of higher education, colleges and universities must have a clear understanding of the purposes and goals to be achieved through the use of new technology. There are multiple mechanisms that can and should be used to meet off-campus needs. In many cases, instructional technologies are not the only tool or even the best tool to use. The Committee believes in crafting specific solutions to meet regional needs and

involving all sectors of higher education in this effort, since private institutions have played a vital role in off-campus programming. However, the Committee also believes that statewide initiatives can only be effective if the public sectors of higher education expand their responsibilities for technology-based instruction.

Public universities have historically had a lower commitment to off-campus programming. Most university off-campus programs are concentrated in a few disciplines such as business, health, and education. Moreover, some universities require off-campus programs to be self supporting and allocate them little or no state subsidy. Public universities should expand off-campus programs offered through new technologies. They should work closely with community colleges in this process, using their facilities and resources to host such programs whenever appropriate. To encourage such baccalaureate degree completion programs, the Board of Higher Education proposed funding of $1.3 million under a new strategic grants initiative in its 2002 budget recommendations for Illinois higher education.

In recent years, community colleges have been placed in a difficult situation. As local institutions they have a special responsibility to meet emerging needs. Yet, responding to some needs, such as for baccalaureate degree completion and master's level programming, is beyond their scope. The Committee believes that the educational responsibilities of Illinois community colleges should be expanded. While under no conditions should community colleges offer baccalaureate degrees, these institutions should become the local point of contact for offering information and advice about all types of education, whatever the educational level.

Finally, the Board of Higher Education should formulate statewide policies and coordinate efforts to strengthen the new community college and public university responsibilities outlined above. The Board should collect and analyze information to support the development of technology-based instruction at the post-baccalaureate and master's level and identify areas of high student demand. The Board should also facilitate community college efforts and work with the Illinois Century Network , as discussed below, to narrow the digital divide.

## Equity Considerations

As new technologies spread, persons without a computer are at a disadvantage. Differences in computer ownership and Internet access, the so-called Digital Divide, are most affected by income, racial/ethnic, and geographic factors. A high-income urban family, for example, is 20 times more likely than a low-income rural family to access the Internet. A child in a low-income white family is three times more likely to have Internet access than a child in a comparable black family and four times more likely as a Hispanic child.

New instructional technologies are in a critical stage of development. Efforts to expand the reach of this technology must be as inclusive as possible, or Illinois higher education runs the risk of establishing a new set of barriers for those who are already underrepresented. In recent years, the U.S. Army and private corporations have undertaken major efforts to extend computer access by providing this technology to their employees. Higher education should undertake similarly broad-based initiatives to expand the availability

of computers and instructional technology courses for Illinois residents. The community colleges should play a central role in this process taking advantage of their statewide presence and local community knowledge. Studies to assess the need for technology-based instruction analyses should be broadly cast. To date, too few programs serve members of underrepresented populations. Indeed, some Internet courses are presented in formats that make this instruction difficult or impossible to access by students with some disabilities. The Illinois Century Network should playing a leading role in developing technology-based programs that help bridge the digital divide.

## Cost Barriers

Illinois' commitment to student financial aid was recently recognized by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education which awarded Illinois an *A* in affordability in *Measuring Up: 2000*. The central weapon in the Illinois affordability arsenal, the Monetary Award Program, will award $357 million in need-based grants this year. Even with such assistance, however, many students face real problems in affording a college education.

The cost that students pay for their education powerfully affects access. Cost must be understood in its broadest sense, encompassing not only tuition, fees, room, and board charges but also financial aid. Is college more or less affordable than it used to be? Is the cost barrier higher or lower for prospective students? As shown below, the evidence is mixed.

On the one hand, tuition and fee charges at all types of institutions have risen faster than the consumer price index or disposable income (see text box). On the other hand, financial aid has grown to offset cost increases. In recent years, the federal government enacted the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits to provide significant tax relief to middle-income families. During the past decade, the state increased the number of MAP awards by 24 percent and the average award by 45 percent. Also, in 1997 the state established the Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA) program to provide $500 grants to freshmen who have no family resources to help them pay for college. Other financial aid initiatives have included expansion of MAP to fund students at proprietary institutions, as well as pilot projects to extend MAP to summer school students and students enrolled less than half time.

A recent study by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission offers an in-depth look at college affordability. The ISAC study calculated changes in need among ISAC recipients in the lowest three income quintiles, or bottom 60 percent, of the state's population. The study considered changes in tuition, fees, room, and board costs; federal Pell and MAP grants; and expected contributions from parents. The study did not include institutional grant aid, a sizeable resource, especially among private institutions and the University of Illinois.

College Affordability: 1990 to 2000

During the past decade, tuition and fees rose by 76 percent at public universities, 70 percent at community colleges and 89 percent at independent institutions. To offset these cost increases, funding for need-based MAP grants grew by 93 percent. During this same period, the consumer price index increased by 32 percent and Illinois per capita disposable income by 50 percent.

The results of the ISAC study vary by income level and type of institution but generally show that over the past 13 years college has become more affordable for community college students and less affordable for students attending public universities and private institutions. For instance, the remaining need of students in the first quintile declined from $1,487 in 1987 to $499 in 2000 at community colleges but increased during these same years from $1,948 to $2,789 at public universities and from $8,132 to $15,003 at private institutions (in constant 2000 dollars).

Another indicator of student affordability is loan debt. Over the past five years, the average loan debt of Illinois seniors participating in the federal Stafford student loan program (guaranteed by ISAC) rose by 34 percent from $11,200 in 1995 to $15,000 in 1999. Some students have loan indebtedness that greatly exceeds this average. Increases in loan debt over the past five years amounted to 4 percent at community colleges, 19 percent at public universities, and 42 percent at private institutions. Borrowing has not negatively affected student participation, although some level of debt could have this impact.

While affordability has worsened in recent years, higher rates of return for some students have offset the higher costs. A recent study by the USA Group Foundation found four-year public graduates required fewer months to recover their educational costs during the 1990s than at any time since the early 1970s. On the other hand, students who left school without a degree took longer to recover their expenses than in the previous decade. The report concludes that "the financial penalties for attending four-year colleges without completing and earning degrees rose significantly for undergraduates during the 1990s."

General patterns, of course, mask important differences within student populations. As discussed in the Committee's hearings and focus group meetings, many low- and moderate- income adults have difficulty paying for college. Moreover, some of these students are ineligible for MAP awards since they are not enrolled at least half time. A small grant award can make a big difference in the lives of such students enabling them to continue and complete their education.

In recent years, the state has undertaken select programs for poor and non-traditional students. One such initiative is the Illinois Incentive for Access Program (IIA), for students whose families cannot contribute to their college expenses. A 1999 ISAC study indicates that IIA recipients are older than traditionally-aged college students, more likely to be independent, and more likely to be women who have children. The study found, in particular, that IIA had an impact on student retention in the first year. Based on performance, the ISAC report proposed extending IAA to freshmen who had minimal financial resources. It did not support extending aid to sophomores since the *"[f]reshman year poses the biggest hurdle for at-risk students and should remain the focal point of State aid efforts"* (emphasis added).

Because the freshman year is a critical time for many students, the Committee strongly supports extending IIA to needy freshmen with minimal financial resources. The Committee proposes in the next chapter other measures for reducing student attrition in the first year. Taken together, financial aid and student support initiatives should enable colleges and universities to better meet the needs of entering students, thereby improving student completion and time to degree.

ISAC has also initiated a special project for students enrolled less than half time. A total of 21 institutions participated in this $800,000 demonstration project in fiscal year 2[illegible]. The project provided awards tc less than half time students who met all other MAP eligibility requirements, such as residency and degree seeking status. Because of the students' part-time status, awards could not exceed one-fourth of their MAP eligibility. Based on initial participation in this project, ISAC has estimated that it would cost $3.5 million to extend MAP awards to all less than half time students. The Committee supports extending MAP to students enrolled less than half time.

Recently, merit-based scholarships have gained the attention of state legislatures. In 1999, California created the Cal Grant Entitlement Program. This program uses merit and financial need criteria in awarding student scholarships. In 2000, House Bill 3831 proposing the creation of a Higher Education Scholarship Act (HESA) was introduced in the 91st Illinois General Assembly. HESA is a merit-based scholarship for students who maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. It has no financial need component.

The Committee generally supports existing Board policy that financial aid should be awarded on a needs basis. However, recent initiatives in other states suggest that merit awards may have some value as an incentive to improve student preparation and degree completion. The state of Illinois may wish to explore pilot projects that seek to improve college participation and reduce student attrition through financial aid incentives. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that such awards do not have unintended academic consequences, such as grade inflation, or drain resources from need-based aid.

## Accessibility

Students with disabilities are confronted with barriers that severely limit their access to higher education. Because these barriers often prove insurmountable, they are more likely than any other group of students not to go to college or, once there, to drop out. Statistics about students with disabilities are alarming, as shown below in a chart from the National Center for Education Statistics.

| Less likely to: | More likely to: |
|---|---|
| Graduate from high school | Take remedial courses in college |
| Have educational aspirations beyond HS | Participate in college volunteer activities |
| Take advanced placement courses in HS | Have lower average SAT scores |
| Be academically prepared for college | Have a lower HS grade point average |
| Enroll in college after HS | Delay enrollment into college |
| Enroll full-time | Enroll part-time |
| Persist in degree completion | Be a single parent |
| Work while in college | |
| Receive financial aid of any type | |
| Be employed after college graduation | |

The number of students with disabilities going to college is increasing. Nationally, one in eleven freshmen reported having at least one disability. A 1999 report by the

American Council on Education indicates that the percentage of full-time college freshmen reporting disabilities increased from 7 percent in 1988 to 9.4 percent in 1998. The largest increase was seen in students reporting learning disabilities. Table 2 shows trends in the number of college freshmen reporting disabilities over a ten-year period.

As the number of students with disabilities continues to increase on campus, so does the demand for services. Institutions struggle to maintain a level of service to meet the specific needs of all students. Recent amendments to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also raise cost concerns. The 1998 amendments call for the development of an interagency agreement on cost sharing between the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) and public postsecondary institutions. As a result, institutions may be faced with additional costs that were previously covered by DORS.

**Table 2**

**Percentage of Full-Time College Freshmen Reporting Disabilities: Selected Years**

| Disability | 1988 | 1991 | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speech | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.5% |
| Orthopedic | 1.0% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.8% |
| Learning disability | 1.2% | 2.2% | 3.0% | 3.1% | 3.5% |
| Health-related | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.7% |
| Partially sighted or blind | 1.9% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 1.1% |
| Hearing* | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.9% |
| Other | 1.4% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.9% |
| Total | 7.0% | 8.8% | 9.2% | 9.2% | 9.4% |

* Hearing data were not collected in 1998. The 1998 figure reflects 1996 data.

Note: Figures in columns do not necessarily equal the totals at the bottom, because individuals were allowed to identify more than one disability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. Based on unpublished data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, selected years.

While recognizing the concern about the increased costs of providing accommodations for students with disabilities, the Committee calls attention to the broader picture. Unless society pays the cost of educating students with disabilities, additional societal obligations will be incurred to support those who are unemployed, under-educated, and poor. Persons with disabilities who graduate from college hold jobs and become taxpayers. Because the value added by college is perhaps greater for this group than any other, the Committee suggests that institutions more actively recruit students with disabilities. Recruitment of faculty with disabilities is also a concern. Students with disabilities, as with other underrepresented groups, need positive role models. Students with disabilities proceed to graduate school at the same rate as other students, and efforts should be made to encourage these students to consider careers in higher education.

The Committee believes there is a growing need for an effective higher education disability policy. However, because federal law specifies that students do not have to divulge information about their disability, we know little about them. The Board should explore opportunities to modify statewide databases, such as the Baccalaureate Follow-Up Survey, to gather additional information about students with disabilities. However, comprehensive policy development may need to await in-depth consultation with students and staff at the campus level.

## Transitions

One of the most difficult barriers facing a student with disabilities is the transition from high school to college, a passage which is especially traumatic for this population. Students with disabilities, as shown above, are less academically prepared than their counterparts. Also, many students with disabilities are not ready for independent living and self advocacy once on campus. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires students with disabilities to take individual responsibility for services and accommodations. This role can be foreign to many students who previously relied on parents or others to advocate on their behalf during elementary and secondary school.

Lack of independent living skills and need for remediation, often compounded by the belief that the disability is the cause for remediation, can create psychological barriers against further education. Planning is a key element in making a successful transition. Planning should start early, help overcome disability-related learning deficiencies, and strengthen self-advocacy skills. Before students arrive on campus, staff should meet with them to design individual plans.

**Adapting to College Life**

*"Students with (severe) disabilities are rarely, if ever, prepared at the time of high school graduation to deal with the rigorous academic life of college while concurrently acquiring the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to successfully live independently, including hiring, training, scheduling, and managing personal assistant personnel."*

Dr. Brad Hedrick, Director of Rehabilitation Services, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Students with disabilities that are graduating and leaving college also may need help in preparing for this experience. Once in the workforce and living in a community, students may not have access to the range of services and resources previously available on campus. Support staff can help students make the transition to the post-graduate setting by providing information and counseling students about the various services likely to be available and helping them formulate plans for making effective use of these resources.

## Persistence and Attrition

Attrition is an issue of concern for all students, but students with disabilities are at greater risk. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that over a five year period (1990-1994), about 53 percent of students with disabilities had persisted in their postsecondary program, while 64 percent of students without disabilities did so.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) require postsecondary institutions to provide program modifications and auxiliary aids to students with disabilities. However, the legal rights of persons with disabilities has undergone some change after a February 2001 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that state employees do not have the right to bring suit in federal court to recover money damages under the ADA.

Institutions offer many services and the mix of services varies among institutions. A NCES report indicates that 98 percent of the institutions that enrolled students with disabilities provided at least one support service or accommodation. By law, institutions are required to provide course materials in alternative formats. For example, students with visual impairments may require materials in audio format or large print and hearing impaired students may require transcripts of audio material. Reproduction of materials can be time consuming and costly, indirectly affecting student learning. California has taken steps to address this problem by passing a law that requires publishers of textbooks doing business in California to make available materials in electronic format. The ability to access material in this way allows for quick reproduction and places materials in the hands of students in a timely fashion. The Committee supports the passage of a similar law in Illinois.

Advances in technology have provided students with disabilities new learning tools. Technology, however, can have conflicting effects. Assistive technology, such as voice activation, modified keyboards, and screen magnification, has made it possible for students with disabilities to participate more fully in the higher education experience. On the other hand, increasing use of technology-based instruction, if not properly designed, may limit access for students with disabilities. Distance education programs should be as inclusive as possible. Programs should employ existing design protocols already in place that address the concerns of the disabled community and take advantage of assistive technologies currently available.

In conclusion, the Committee calls for a statewide conference on students with disabilities to focus on the topics of transition and persistence and how they are affected by new and emerging assistive technologies. This conference would bring together secondary and postsecondary faculty and staff, state agency staff, students with disabilities, and other interested parties.

## The Language Barrier

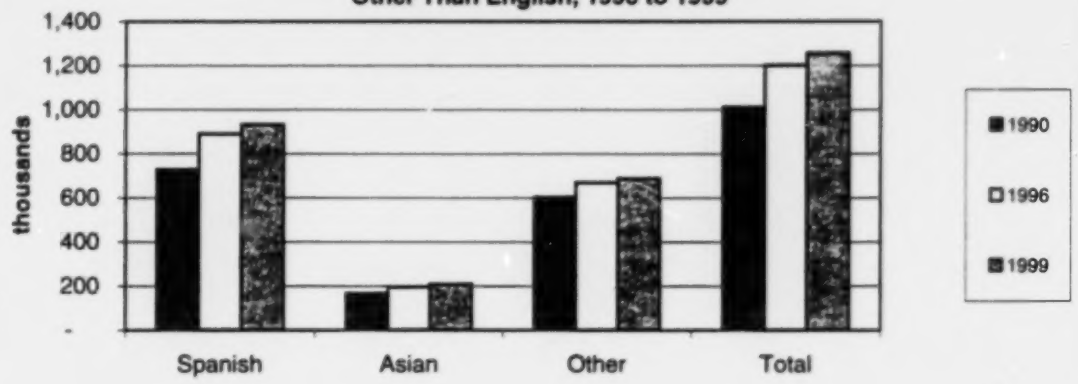
One hidden obstacle to college is the ability to speak and write English. Current levels of immigration in the United States are the highest in seven decades, and Illinois ranks among the six largest immigration states. As Figure C demonstrates, the number of non-native English speaking adults in Illinois has increased markedly throughout the past decade. Not surprisingly, during this same period of time, demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes has grown.

ESL instruction varies greatly. Students in the same course can include both immigrants with limited written proficiency in their native language, as well as those who

hold advanced degrees from foreign institutions. Classes range from instruction in basic speaking and listening skills to graduate programming. Many ESL courses also teach knowledge and skills needed for work and citizenship and are sponsored by various entities, such as community-based organizations, churches, libraries, local businesses, and unions. A 1998 NCES study found that 42 percent of ESL classes are part of a college program.

The unique nature of ESL instruction is a source of strength and weakness. On the one hand, its informal nature and local setting promote access and affordability. The 1998 NCES study found that about two thirds of ESL students paid less than $100 of their own money for tuition or related educational expenses. On the other hand, ESL instruction depends to an unusual degree on part-time instructors, many of whom have limited time for preparation and whose professional development costs are rarely reimbursed. Not surprisingly, these instructors have a high rate of turnover.

**Figure C**
**Adults In Illinois Households Speaking Language Other Than English, 1990 to 1999**




In Illinois, adult education regional service centers and the Professional Development Partnership Center provide effective ESL related training. However, many ESL instructors cannot participate in these activities. Technology-based instruction and resources, either on CD-ROM, videotape, or the Web, are ideally suited to serve the needs of these instructors. Further study and coordinated effort is required to identify the types of customized technology-based programs best suited for this profession.

With the transfer of responsibility for adult education from the State Board of Education to the Illinois Community College Board, policies, programs, and practices in the field of English as a Second Language may be reexamined and modified in the coming years. This review could include possible issues such as increasing the number of English as a Second Language teachers, improving professional development, coordinating college and university efforts with community-based organizations, and maximizing the use of technology. The Committee believes that in the interim it is important that this area of

education receive greater attention and suggests that the Board of Higher Education and Illinois Community College Board sponsor a conference in the coming year on the use of technology-based instruction for the professional development of ESL instructors.

## Summary

Among today's colleges and universities, there is no typical student. "Joe College" no longer represents, if he ever did, the students who attend our institutions. This mythical figure must now step aside and take his place with students whose characteristics more closely mirror those of the general population. These students, as this chapter has attempted to make clear, have a great variety of access needs.

To date, the state has relied on its community college system and need-based financial aid to provide access. The quality of these access mechanisms is undeniable and, are major factors contributing to Illinois receiving an *A* grade in participation on the national report *Measuring Up, 2000.* However, these mechanisms, no matter how good, do not address all access needs. Distance to education and the cost of education continue to trouble many residents, while other barriers, such as student pre-collegiate preparation, time availability and distance to campus, disability, and English language ability present formidable challenges.

## CHAPTER III

# THE RIGHT KIND OF ACCESS

*With more students going to college, especially students from groups with historically lower college participation rates, degree completion and time to degree assume greater prominence. In this environment, Illinois higher education must reconceptualize its ideas about access, examining not only whether students have access but whether students have access to the programs and services that best meet their needs. To address this issue effectively, we must put aside remnants of the old tradition whereby students are dared to succeed and high levels of student failure and attrition are accepted. Instead, we must pursue a philosophy of educational development which seeks to help all students fully realize their educational potential and whereby institutions commit themselves to that purpose.*

### Pressures on Degree Completion and Time to Degree

American higher education can be proud of the fact that an increasing portion of our population attends college. Our record, however, is more problematic in regard to degree completion. Indeed, student attrition is the Achilles heel of Illinois' higher education system. While Illinois received the highest grades of any state overall in the national report, *Measuring Up, 2000*, the state received only a *C+* on its student persistence grade. Of course, some students, particularly at community colleges, only want to take a course or two, and do not intend to complete a degree program. Still, too many students leave college without achieving their educational goals.

*The "quiet revolution" brings to the doorstep of higher education greater numbers of types of students who have historically lower rates of degree completion.*

For about ten years, the Board of Higher Education has tracked the academic progress of first-time, first-year students at Illinois public universities through its Shared Enrollment and Graduation Information System. Because this database includes both full-time and part-time students and excludes those who attend private institutions and out of state institutions, it slightly underestimates student completion rates and overestimates the time that full-time students take to complete their degrees. The Board's last report on this topic in June 1999, *Persistence, Graduation, and Time-to-Degree*, included two major findings:

- About one quarter of public university freshmen graduate in four years. After five years, slightly less than half graduate, and by the end of six years, about 56 percent do so. Sixty-one percent of public university freshmen in the Board's 1999 study eventually graduated (in seven to ten years depending on the entry year of the cohort).

- Six-year graduation rates for minority students are substantially below those of all students, but their graduation rates improve with each additional year. The rate for Black students climbed from 29 percent after six years to 38 percent after seven to ten years, and the Hispanic graduation rate increased from 39 percent to 48 percent over this period of time.

The "quiet revolution" brings to the doorstep of higher education greater numbers of minority students, older students, and first-generation college students with lower rates of degree completion than the general student population. More of our incoming students will be at-risk. Some will have academic deficiencies that require remediation. Others face hurdles of social adjustment or the pressure of fitting courses into busy work and family schedules.

The Board's shared enrollment database does not permit identification of older students or first-generation students. However, a number of studies have documented the hazardous journey these students face on the road to degree completion. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that such students are much more likely than their traditional counterparts to leave school and take longer to compete their degrees. A 1996 NCES study found that non-traditional students are more than twice as likely to leave school in their first year than are traditional students (38 percent to 16 percent). After the first year, however, there is little difference in attrition between the two groups.

The increase in the enrollment of underrepresented populations has occurred concurrently with a general shift in course-taking behavior. While new enrollment patterns are varied and complex, they clearly have negative implications for student degree completion and time to degree. Two salient trends have emerged: more students are taking courses from more than one institution, and more students are taking longer to complete their degrees as they alternate or combine periods of work and education over considerable periods of time.

Today's Transition to Adulthood: Policy Implications

*"In the 1990s, the transition to adulthood takes much longer. Most young people do not take on full-time jobs after high school. Instead, they enroll in college, where many of them will remain for more than four years. They are likely to leave school later, marry later, and have children later. This elongated transition is filled with a series of decisions that will have consequences for their futures....Without a coherent plan, adolescents can find such choices overwhelming and less than meaningful."*

*"The social world of adolescents in the 1990s is more complex....Schooling is more complex because students can choose to study a wider range of subjects, to earn postsecondary degrees in more fields and at more institutions, and to select among numerous financial aid programs to support their efforts."*

*In helping adolescents develop coherent ambitions, two policy areas need to be addressed: policies that help students develop better understanding of the connections between high school and college; and policies that promote the transfer of credits from two-year to four-year institutions."*

Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation: America's Teenagers, Motivated but Directionless*

Clifford Adelman in his study *Answers in the Tool Box* has noted that the number of students attending more than one institution has increased dramatically from 40 percent in the

1970s to over 60 percent at the end of the 1990s. The number of students attending more than two institutions has risen at an even faster rate. Adelman concludes that student enrollment patterns are now better described as "portfolio building" rather than transfer.

The implications of this changing student behavior are not fully understood, although one consequence has been that students are now more independent of their educational institutions. This independence may facilitate student progress, such as the case of a university student who fulfills a general education requirement during the summer at a community college. However, students taking courses from multiple institutions may run considerable risk if courses do not form a coherent educational program or if institutions deny credit awarded by another institution.

Changing student enrollment patterns reflect broader trends in employment and education among young adults. In the United States, there is no clear school to work transition. Many students often begin work in high school, and combine or alternate work with school over a considerable period of time, in some cases a decade or more. The metaphor of a pipeline, used by many educators to describe the process whereby students enter education in early childhood and follow a steady progression until they leave with a terminal degree, holds only for some middle and upper-income students and high-achieving students. In contrast, some educational researchers describe an increasing number of students as following a pattern of "swirling" with various points of entry and exit in education and employment. Still others are said to be "churning", a vivid and accurate description for those whose educational or employment experience is less than successful.

## Facilitating College Transition and Student Success

In the pluralistic world of Illinois higher education, no single definition of student success holds. Rather, colleges and universities must assist students to formulate educational goals that meet their needs, and then monitor and facilitate student efforts to achieve these goals. The Committee proposes two initiatives to promote student progress. One seeks to ensure that prospective students have better information to plan their education. A complementary approach supports students in their critical first year of college.

### Consumer Information System

In 1997, the Board of Higher Education passed a recommendation that Illinois higher education implement a Consumer Information System. This recommendation was developed out of a study, *Distance Learning: Framework for a Comprehensive Consumer Information System*, which examined the implications of technology-based instruction upon the Board's regulatory authority. The study described the difficulties that Board faces in protecting Illinois consumers from fraudulent and substandard degrees because statutory jurisdiction only applies to institutions that have a physical presence in the state and does not cover technology-based, distance learning programs. To partially remedy this situation, the study proposed the creation of a Web-based Consumer Information System to help residents gain knowledge and become more informed "consumers" of higher education.

### The Student as Consumer

*"Helping learners to identify educational quality and importance will need to be addressed as choice-based and consumer oriented models dominate public policies. Online courses and other resources that can inform and support learning how to make good choices (including educational choices) is one way to address this problem before students even begin to consider college or university as an alternative. For rather obvious bootstrapping reasons, failing in this educational task will mean that there is less chance to reach such prospective students later on."*

Nicholas Burbles and Thomas Callister, *The Promise and the Challenge of New Technologies.*

The Committee strongly supports implementation of a Consumer Information System which could become a powerful access tool. Underrepresented students would especially benefit from such a system, if it provided information about student services. For instance, varied services are provided to the disabled population. While all institutions offer some services, some have more fully developed programs for target populations, such as Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for students with learning disabilities and the University of Illinois–Urbana/Champaign for students with multiple disabilities and mobility impairments.

A Consumer Information System could also help other types of students. For example, adult students could find information about the kinds of services that "best practice" institutions make available for them. These older students could then take this advisory information and search the Consumer Information System to find the colleges and universities that offer such services. In the same way, students considering a technology-based class could access information not only about available courses and programs, but also about types of students best served by such courses.

A Consumer Information System would well serve the increasing number of students who attend multiple institutions during the course of their educational career. As has been shown, students today are more independent of any single institution. This independence offers students more choices as they become active participants in shaping their own education. However, this independence also brings risks and the need for good information. A statewide source that offers information from multiple institutions would serve students, whatever their current enrollment status, as they cycle in and out of work and educational settings.

Building upon the 1997 Board report, the Consumer Information System would take the form of a single Web site housed at the Board of Higher Education that provides information on programs, institutions, and services to facilitate consumer protection and educational planning. The Board's Consumer Information System would provide a comprehensive resource with links to other relevant Web sites. For example, consumers could link to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission for information on financial aid or to the Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee for information about professions and careers. On a periodic basis, an advisory group would provide advice to the Board on the kind of information that would be most useful and appropriate to put on the Web site.

## The First Year of College

The first year of college is tough. About one third of students leave college in the first year and many decide in the first few months whether they will continue with their education. One cannot overemphasize the importance of this transition period, particularly for some minority students. For instance, Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service has noted:

> *"For all students, the transition to college constitutes a major disjunction in their life course. The process is a highly interrelated series of academic, interpersonal, family and organizational pulls and pushes that shape student learning, persistence, retention, and degree completion....Inevitably, however, the process is far more of an obstacle course for some students than for others....First generation Hispanic students have a much more complicated and challenging adaptation. For these students, attending college is not part of their families' traditions or expectations, And for those who are the first in their immediate family to attend college, it can result in breaking, not continuing, family support".* (emphasis in the original)

The Committee's hearings provided evidence about the numerous special institutional programs that seek to improve student retention and degree completion in the first year. It is clear that institutional efforts to reduce attrition have accelerated at the same time that college-going rates have risen. The range of new programming is impressive. It includes orientation short courses, supplementary instruction in "gatekeeper courses" that have the highest rates of failure, and early warning systems that alert students in academic difficulty. Other initiatives, such as scheduling a common group of students for a block of general education courses, reflect lessons learned from recent research: students that are interconnected and actively engaged are not likely to drop out.

Despite these improvements, the Committee believes that higher education can provide more support for students in the first year, particularly for historically underrepresented students. To create such a climate requires improved communication and coordination among all campus personnel, particularly between faculty and support staff. It also requires a strong institutional commitment to ensuring that every student can succeed.

The Board of Higher Education can stimulate and nurture efforts to better support first year students, especially underrepresented students, by initiating studies and funding projects that seek to develop alternative approaches The Board should include in this initiative organizations with special knowledge and expertise. For instance, in the past year, the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning has developed "Principles of Effectiveness", or institutional best practices that serve adult learners. The Committee believes that Illinois higher education should support CAEL's efforts to disseminate these principles throughout the state. The Committee also believes that Illinois higher education should develop a similar set of best practice principles to serve students in their first year of college.

## Summary

For more than a decade, Illinois higher education has emphasized two important policy themes: strengthening undergraduate education and increasing cooperation with elementary/secondary education to improve college readiness. In this report, the Committee seeks to build upon and integrate these policy initiatives, placing them in a context to strengthen access and diversity in Illinois higher education.

The previous chapter addressed how pre-collegiate academic preparation limits access and proposed ways to create a more flexible and effective transition from high school to college. This chapter discusses how student transitions to college could be further strengthened by the development and implementation of a Consumer Information System--particularly if that system is sensitive to the needs of students from historically underserved populations--and by better supporting historically underrepresented students in the first year of college. The Committee recommends that the Illinois Board of Higher Education support model projects and coordinate the development of a set of "principles of effectiveness" to better serve such students in their first year.

## CHAPTER IV

# ENSURING DIVERSITY

*The recommendations in this report that seek to reduce barriers to access and facilitate student transition and success will also enhance diversity in Illinois higher education. Achieving greater diversity will provide educational benefits to all students and, more broadly, serve our state and nation. More must be done, however, for higher education to obtain the diversity it seeks. While an unsettled legal environment presents challenges to addressing this issue, the Committee believes that significant improvements in diversity can be made at Illinois colleges and universities.*

### The Role of Diversity in Higher Education

Diversity is a concept rooted in the tradition and practices of higher education. It is one of the key ideas, along with community and freedom of thought, that colleges and universities employ to foster learning and prepare students for their post-collegiate lives. Diversity is presented here in its broadest sense: the bringing together of persons of different backgrounds and perspectives to create a community in which all ideas are respected and explored and all students benefit from the experience. Diversity refers not only to differences in student talents and interests but also to differences in region, class, culture, gender, age, race/ethnicity and disability.

As an articulated goal of higher education, diversity dates back to at least the early 19th century. For instance, the scholar Cardinal John Henry Newman in his book *The Idea of a University* advocated that colleges should contain a "multitude" of students that "come together and freely mix with each other....[and] are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them." In the United States, the goal of diversity has had particular resonance because of our democratic ideals and social traditions. Americans have viewed themselves as living in a "melting pot" or "salad bowl" which stimulates productivity and creativity. We have favorably contrasted our country to the less diversified nations of Europe seen as lacking in the dynamism needed for social and economic progress.

Because of the diversity that exists within our state and nation, we must have institutions capable of creating bonds among our citizenry so that diversity becomes a positive rather than a divisive force. Our educational system, historically, has served this function. With the possible exception of the armed forces, whose capabilities have diminished with the end of the draft, no other cultural or social institution can achieve this goal on a broad scale.

Elementary/secondary education and higher education have somewhat distinct roles in the preparation of our youth to become American citizens and workers. While schools teach students about the nation's culture and heritage, colleges and universities draw from a broader regional and demographic base and bring together different types of students who learn with and from one another the knowledge and skills needed for personal and societal success.

Diversity is integral to the instructional process. Dating back to the time of Socrates, professors have sought to clarify thought and find meaning through rhetorical arguments that contrast ideas and challenge assumptions and received opinion. Today, academic programs seek to build upon this tradition by creating instructional settings that stimulate student learning through use of difference. Cooperative learning, for instance, enhances academic achievement through team building and other pedagogical mechanisms that foster interaction among students from different groups and backgrounds. Contemporary scholars, as well as seminal thinkers on human development such as Jean Piaget, have shown that interaction with people who have different backgrounds and points of view deepens learning and stimulates individual growth. The intellectual benefits derived from such experiences go far beyond what can be obtained from written sources or formal lectures.

"Diverse learning environments impart the broad knowledge and social skills needed for success after graduation."

Diverse learning environments also impart the broad knowledge and social skills needed for success after graduation. Students who attend schools with those different from themselves make better citizens since they acquire wide-ranging knowledge about the beliefs, practices, and needs of their community, state, and nation. Such students also make better employees, not only because they are prepared for the diversity of the workplace, but also because an education rooted in diversity prepares students for more varied conditions of professional practice.

**Table 3**

**What Should a Student Gain From College?**

| Question | Absolutely Essential | Important But Not Essential | Not too Important |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sense of Maturity and How to Manage on Their Own | 71% | 26% | 2% |
| **Ability to Get Along with People Different From Themselves** | **68%** | **29%** | **2%** |
| Improved Ability to Solve Problems/Think Analytically | 63% | 34% | 1% |
| Learning High Tech Skills | 61% | 34% | 1% |
| Specific Expertise and Knowledge in Chosen Careers | 60% | 35% | 4% |
| Top-notch Writing and Speaking Skills | 57% | 38% | 4% |
| Responsibilities of Citizenship | 44% | 47% | 9% |
| Exposure to Great Writers and Thinkers | 32% | 53% | 14% |

Source: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Great Expectations: How Illinois Residents View Higher Education*

It may seem that the above arguments that expound the virtue of diversity are so rooted in the traditions and practices of higher education they would have little appeal to a general audience. Such is not the case. Recent surveys of Illinois residents conducted by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education indicate that the values and outcomes of a diverse education are seen as a fundamental reason to obtain a college degree. For instance, as shown in Table 3 above, 68 percent of all respondents thought that it was

"absolutely essential" that one of the things a student should gain from college was "an ability to get along with people different from themselves."

Given the importance of diversity for student learning and development, institutions have used various mechanisms, such as admissions and financial aid, to broaden their campus communities. As American society has become more racially/ethnically diverse and women have increased their participation in the workforce, higher education has more actively employed such mechanisms. One change in admissions policy is noteworthy: there has been a steady decline in the number of institutions that serve a single gender or race/ethnicity. Beyond this, various institutional programs and initiatives, supported with federal and state aid, have helped increase the percentage of female enrollment, particularly at the graduate/professional level, and Black and Hispanic enrollment.

In the current environment, where the term diversity is more likely to be applied to race/ethnicity and gender than region and class, the question naturally arises whether the educational advantages of diversity still hold. The results of recent research (see below) show that this is indeed the case and that campuses and classrooms that have substantial race/ethnic diversity offer a better education to all students and that all students gain in various ways both during and after college from such a learning environment.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons that a racially/ethnically diverse setting provides educational benefits is that this is one of the broader outcomes that students from all groups now seek. This point is reinforced by William Bowen and Derek Bok in *The Shape of the River*, an examination of racial/ethnic attitudes among graduates of select colleges and universities. Bowen and Bok show significant changes over the past decade in the emphasis that these students have placed on "getting along" with persons from other races. They suggest that these attitudinal shifts have broad application since they are rooted in "important changes in the realities that confront everyone in the United States." They state:

> *"[T]he increased importance attached to being able to work with, and get along with, people of different racial and cultural groups makes very good sense in light of known demographic trends: the country in which the '89 matriculants will live and work will have a more diverse racial makeup than the one that earlier cohorts encountered. As the population of the country becomes evermore racially diverse, and as white Americans see their dominant majority status erode, the need to work effectively with individuals of other races will become an increasingly inescapable reality to members of <u>every</u> racial group."* (emphasis in original)

## Race/Ethnic Diversity Produces Educational Benefits for All Students

As our nation has become more demographically diverse, the role of race and ethnicity has received greater examination. In the past decade, higher education researchers have completed a number of studies demonstrating the positive outcomes that come from attending institutions with a pluralistic race/ethnic enrollment. Summarized below are a few key findings from this growing body of research.

## Student Achievement

Studies on the influence of race/ethnic diversity have examined the correlation between students' education and subsequent changes in their attitudes and academic achievement. One such work, *The Compelling Need for Diversity in Higher Education*, by Patricia Gurin found that learning increases with the level of diversity. Gurin discovered that "students who had experienced the most diversity in classroom settings and in informal interactions with peers showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills."

### Broadening Experience and Understanding

*"Race almost always affects an individual's life experiences and perspectives, and thus the person's capacity to contribute to the kinds of learning through diversity that occur on campuses.....To be sure, not all members of a minority group may succeed in expanding the racial understanding of other students, any more than all those who grew up on a farm or came from a remote region of the United States can be expected to convey a special rural perspective. What does seem clear, however, is that a student body containing many different backgrounds, talents, and experiences will be a richer environment in which to develop."*

William G. Bowen & Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River.*

In another study, Jeff Milem of the University of Maryland found that diverse race/ethnic environments produce long-term gains in student learning and achievement. Milem discovered that "higher levels of interaction with diversity in college predict higher levels of retention and increases the degree aspirations of students." Another interesting finding concerns diverse faculty. Milem showed that the three missions of higher education institutions (teaching, research, and service) are enriched by a faculty that includes women and persons of color. These faculty tend to use student-centered pedagogy that positively affects student learning. They also engage in research that expands knowledge about race/ethnicity and gender.

According to a study by the American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors, a majority of faculty and students believe that the wide range of ideas and perspectives found in a multi-racial/ethnic setting enhances complex thinking among all students. This study also showed that faculty and students believe that cognitive and personal development is positively affected by learning in a diverse classroom.

## Economic Benefits

In today's global economy, the ability to work and communicate with people of all cultures, races, and ethnicities has growing importance. Indeed, according to a 1994 RAND Corporation report, "cross-cultural competence" is the most critical human resource need of the new economy. In an article in the January 1999 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, "Diversity and Competitive Advantage at Merk," Raymond Gilmartin has shown that education in a race/ethnic setting is more likely to produce graduates who can interact with diverse customers, clients, co-workers, and business partners. The need for such graduates is underscored by the fact that minorities now comprise about one-third of all new workforce entrants in the United States and account for more than $600 billion in purchasing power.

**Table 4**

**Summary of the Educational Benefits of Diverse College and University Campuses**

## Individual Benefits

- Improved racial and cultural awareness
- Enhanced openness to diversity and challenge
- Greater commitment to increasing racial understanding
- Enhanced critical thinking ability
- Greater satisfaction with the college experience
- Perceptions of a more supportive campus racial climate
- Increased wages for men who graduate from higher "quality" institutions

## Institutional Benefits

Benefits to Private Enterprise

- Cultivation of workforce with greater levels of cross-cultural competence
- Attraction of best available talent pool
- Enhanced marketing efforts
- Higher levels of creativity and innovation
- Better problem solving abilities
- Greater organizational flexibility

## Benefits to Higher Education of Faculty Diversity

- More student-centered approaches to teaching and learning
- More diverse curricular offerings
- More research focused on issues of race/ethnicity and gender
- More women and faculty of color involved in community and volunteer service

## Societal Benefits

- More research on the effects of affirmative action in the workplace
- Higher levels of service to community/civic organizations
- Medical service by physicians of color to underserved communities
- Greater equity in society
- A more educated citizenry

Source: Milem, J., "The Educational Benefits of Diversity: Evidence from Multiple Sectors." In *Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Higher Education.* Prepublication Draft.

In recent years, a wide variety of business leaders have come forward to support race/ethnic diversity in higher education. For example, this past year, twenty Fortune 500 companies filed a brief in support of the University of Michigan's admissions policies in a federal court case (see below). These corporations asserted that "managers and employees who graduate from institutions with diverse student bodies are better prepared to understand, learn from and collaborate with others from a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds; demonstrate creative problem solving by integrating differing perspectives; exhibit the skills required for good teamwork; and demonstrate more effective responsiveness to the needs of all types of consumers".

**Corporate Support for Diversity**

*"We believe that workforce diversity is a competitive advantage. Our success as a global community is as dependent on utilizing the wealth of backgrounds, skills, and opinions that a diverse workforce offers, as it is on raw materials, technology and processes."*

Robert J. Eaton,
Chairman and CEO of Chrysler Corporation

More businesses seek a workforce that is diverse at all company levels. Such diversity responds to emerging corporate needs and a post-industrial ethic that places a premium on adaptability, flexibility, and creativity. Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service cites research that shows organizations with a diverse employee base tend to be more innovative and flexible. Minority viewpoints within an organization force re-examination of basic assumptions, encourage open and frank dialogue, and result in less organizational "group think".

In summary, all Illinois residents will realize significant economic benefits through enhancements in educational diversity and achievement. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in its report *Measuring Up: 2000* calculated that in 1998 "if all the ethnic groups in Illinois had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total personal income in the state would have been $9.1 billion higher, and the state would have realize an estimated $3.2 billion in additional tax revenue."

## Civic Benefits

It is a basic tenet of our democracy that persons gain political understanding and competence from interaction with persons from diverse groups. John Stuart Mill, one of the most profound political thinkers, wrote that diversity of experience prepares persons for effective political life by taking them "out of the narrow circle of personal and family selfishness...accustoming them to the comprehension of joint interests, the management of joint concerns...habituating them to...guide their conduct by aims which unite instead of isolating them from one another." Patricia Gurin's research shows that students educated in a diverse race/ethnic environment undergo the kind of transformation spoken about by Mill and, as a result, are better-informed voters, jurors, community association members, and engaged participants in public affairs.

## Diversity in Illinois Higher Education

How is Illinois higher education doing in achieving the diversity it seeks? The answer to this question is not a simple one. On the one hand, Illinois higher education is becoming more diverse, especially when viewed from a broad statewide perspective. On the other hand, Illinois higher education is much less diverse than the state's population and the distribution of enrollments is such that many students go to college only with persons like themselves.

There is no shortage of evidence on how Illinois higher education is becoming more diverse. There are more female students, students with disabilities, older students, and minority students at our colleges and universities than there were a generation or two before. The transformation of our institutions is perhaps most apparent in the escalating increase in female participation in graduate and professional programs. In the early 1980s, females constituted about one quarter of all degree recipients in these programs. Today, females account for more than 40 percent of degree recipients.

Almost as noticeable as the growth in female enrollment in professional programs is the marked increase in minority enrollment at some colleges and universities in urban areas. At the University of Illinois at Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University, for example, whites now account for less than half of total undergraduate enrollment. The diversity of student enrollments at these institutions is remarkable and reflects the influx of immigrants from Mexico and Latin American, Asia, and Eastern Europe, as well as higher rates of participation among Asian-American populations.

Despite this progress, Illinois continues to be much less diverse than it can and should be. A significant imbalance in gender representation exists in computer science, physical science, and engineering programs, where female enrollment is less than 40 percent at the undergraduate level and less than 30 percent at the doctoral level. The male character of these disciplines inhibits participation of some women and has resulted in an increase in foreign student enrollment to meet critical workforce needs.

The lack of diversity is especially problematic in regard to the representation of Black and Hispanic students. While it is difficult to say what amount of minority representation can provide the diversity that is needed, it is clear that Black and Hispanic enrollment is too low, especially in some levels and fields. Recent population increases and projected increases of Black and Hispanic groups within the state highlight the need to achieve greater diversity.

The population of the United States is rapidly changing. In the near future, one out of three Americans will be a member of a racial/ethnic minority. Illinois will experience similar population trends, with minorities comprising 33 percent of the population by 2010 and 36 percent by 2020. Hispanics will be the fastest growing minority group in Illinois and will constitute about 17 percent of the population by 2025, increasing from 13 percent in 2010. The Black population, following the national trend, will remain stable.

Figure D shows the projected Black and Hispanic population percentages, as well as the projected proportion of these populations under 18 years of age in Illinois through 2025. What do these population projections mean for Illinois higher education? Table 5 shows that

if current racial and ethnic participation rates remain constant over the next 25 years, minority student enrollment will increase about 23 percent by 2010 and about 55 percent by 2025. Hispanic students will account for much of the growth, increasing to 13 percent of the total projected enrollment by 2010 and to 17 percent by 2025. As a component of all enrollments, Black enrollment will remain relatively constant at 13.5 percent through 2025.

**Figure D**

**Projected Black and Hispanic Population in Illinois: Percent of Total Population and Population Under 18 Years of Age**

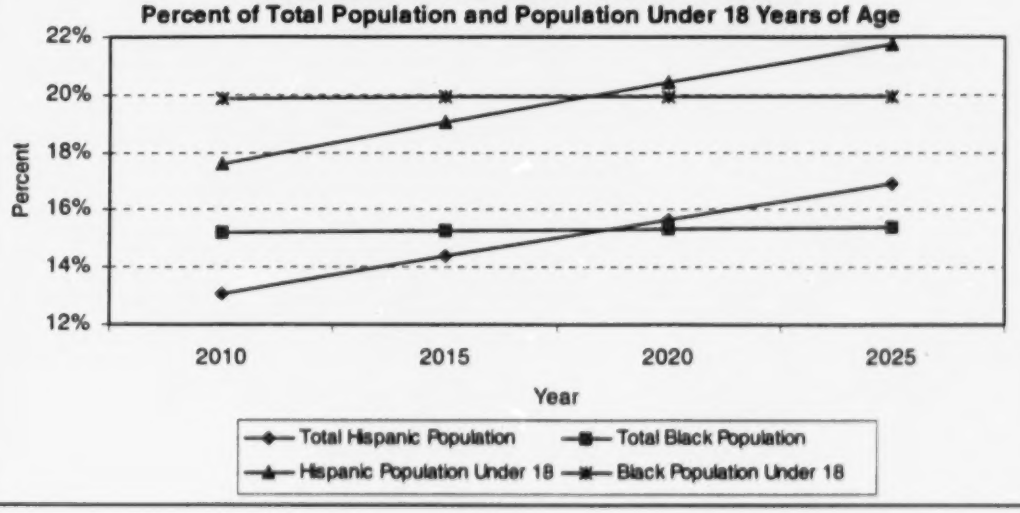



**Table 5**

**Projected Higher Education Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity[1]**

| | Total Projected | White Non-Hispanic | | Black Non-Hispanic | | Hispanic | | Asian or Pacific Islander | | American Indian or Alaskan Native | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | # | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| 1999[2] | 696,103 | 485,231 | 69.7 | 94,528 | 13.6 | 71,706 | 10.3 | 42,379 | 6.1 | 2,259 | 0.3 |
| 2010 | 745,138 | 487,279 | 65.4 | 100,506 | 13.5 | 98,553 | 13.2 | 56,454 | 7.6 | 2,346 | 0.3 |
| 2015 | 766,569 | 486,806 | 63.5 | 103,446 | 13.5 | 111,128 | 14.5 | 62,783 | 8.2 | 2,406 | 0.3 |
| 2025 | 810,004 | 484,197 | 59.8 | 109,013 | 13.5 | 138,510 | 17.1 | 75,710 | 9.3 | 2,575 | 0.3 |

[1] Estimates based on current 1999 population participation rates by race/ethnicity and US Census Bureau population projections.

[2] Figures for 1999 are actual counts from the 2000 Fall Enrollment Survey. The 1999 total does not include the count of non-resident aliens and students of unknown race/ethnicity.

When one goes beyond the picture of demographic representation presented above, the lack of diversity in Illinois higher education becomes most apparent. Black and Hispanic

representation varies significantly by degree level, falling at each step on the education ladder. Thus, while Black enrollment is about 15 percent at the associate level, Black enrollment drops to 12 percent at the bachelor's level, then 10 percent at the master's level, and 6 percent at the doctoral level. For Hispanic students, participation is 9 percent at the associate level, dropping to 7 percent at the bachelor's level and 3 percent at the master's and doctoral levels.

Minority enrollment is highly concentrated. For instance, about 46 percent of all Black undergraduates and 42 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates are found at Illinois' community colleges. Chicago State University enrolls about one third of all Black students in the public universities. The percent of Black and Hispanic students enrolled in some fields such as mathematics and engineering is also very low. In engineering, for example, Black and Hispanic students received less than three percent of all doctoral degrees awarded this past year. No Hispanic or Black student received a doctoral degree in the field of mathematics.

## Diversity and Higher Education Policy in Illinois

Because diversity is such an important goal of higher education, Illinois higher education institutions offer numerous activities and programs to promote it. The Board's *Report to Governor and General Assembly on Underrepresented Groups* each year provides a comprehensive list of programs at Illinois public colleges and universities whose purpose is to improve the representation of women, minorities, and disabled students and staff.

Board policy has sought to encourage and support institutional efforts to improve diversity and has placed special emphasis upon race/ethnic representation. Programs such as the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program and the Minority Graduate Student Incentive Program provide financial aid to increase minority graduate enrollment where diversity is especially low. Improving pre-collegiate education is another focus addressed through the Higher Education Cooperation Grant (HECA) and the Minority Teacher Incentive Grants program. HECA also funds minority projects at the undergraduate and graduate levels and supports transfer centers for minority students at community colleges.

What has been the influence and impact of such institutional and statewide efforts to promote diversity? Two past Board reports in July 1995 and April 2000 have concluded that Illinois compares favorably with other major states, although in no state does minority representation in higher education approach minority representation in the general population. While difficult to assess with precision, the state's strong emphasis upon diversity has had positive results. Elimination of programs that promote diversity, a possible outcome of legal challenges discussed below, could result in a decline in minority enrollment of uncertain proportions. In this environment, the challenge to the state of Illinois is to find feasible ways to protect existing programs while still seeking to advance diversity beyond current levels.

### Legal Considerations

Any policy discussion about race/ethnic diversity in higher education must consider essential legal questions surrounding this issue. To date, there has been only one U.S. Supreme Court Case on the use of race/ethnicity in admission of students by higher education

institutions, the decision of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* in 1978. Throughout the past decade, federal courts have issued a number of conflicting opinions, some at variance with the *Bakke* decision. It is not known if or when the Supreme Court will again consider this matter.

In the *Bakke* case, the Supreme Court ruled on two issues – whether college and university admissions programs could set aside a specific number of places for minority students and whether higher education institutions could consider race and ethnicity to any extent in making admissions decisions. Justice Powell's opinion emerged as the leading opinion of a deeply divided court. The Court ruled unconstitutional the University of California at Davis Medical School practice of setting aside a specific number of places for minority students. However, the Powell opinion stated that higher education institutions could consider race as a factor in admissions because of the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body.

Justice Powell's stated that higher education should be granted discretion in matters of admissions for reasons of the First Amendment and its connection to issues of academic freedom. He concluded:

> *[T]he attainment of a diverse student body ... clearly is a constitutionally permissible goal for an institution of higher education. Academic freedom ... long has been viewed as a special concern of the First Amendment. The freedom of a university to make its own judgments as to education includes the selection of its student body...The atmosphere of 'speculation, experiment and creation'–so essential to the quality of higher education–is widely believed to be promoted by a diverse student body.*

While Powell was willing to grant colleges and universities a certain independence and authority in using race/ethnic criteria in admissions decisions, he rejected use of race/ethnic quotas on grounds of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Powell cited the Harvard College admissions program as a model for the way race and ethnicity should be used in admissions decisions. Harvard included race or ethnicity as a "plus" in admissions, that is, as one of many factors considered, but the institution did not create separate pools of applicants that isolated candidates from comparison with one another.

The 1990's saw several legal challenges to the *Bakke* principal and related doctrines. Notable were Podberesky v. Kirwin (1994); Hopwood v. Texas (1996); Smith v. Washington (2000); Johnson, Bogrow, and Beckenhauer v. The University of Georgia (2000); and Gratz v. Bollinger (2000). In some cases, such as Hopwood, the court ruled against programs that used race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions. In other cases, such as Smith v. Washington (involving law school admissions at the University of Washington) and Gratz v. Bollinger (involving undergraduate admissions at the University of Michigan), courts have upheld the *Bakke* principle. The court held the University of Michigan decision also invalidated past admissions practices which did not follow the principles outlined in *Bakke*.

Table 6

## Selected Federal Court Decisions on Race-Conscious Programs in Education

| Case | Year | Venue | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Admissions** | | | |
| Regents of the University of California v. Bakke | 1978 | US Supreme Court | Consideration of race or ethnicity as one among many educationally relevant factors was allowable, but separate admissions procedures for minorities was prohibited. Justice Powell asserts that higher education institutions could consider race as a "plus" factor in admissions for the purpose of fostering educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body. |
| Hopwood v. State of Texas | 1996 | 5th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | The University of Texas School of Law could not use race as a factor in its admissions program for the purpose of diversity. The court rejects Justice Powell's decision in Bakke that diversity is a compelling interest. |
| Wessman v. Gittens | 1998 | 1st Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | Struck down as unnecessary a selective Boston public high school's policy of assigning places in proportion to the racial and ethnic composition of the pool of qualified applicants. Although the court acknowledged that diversity serves a valuable educational purpose, it viewed the policy more as a method of racial balancing than for attaining diversity. |
| Gratz v. Bollinger | 1997 | Pending: 6th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | Complaint against University of Michigan claiming the university unlawfully used different admissions standards for white and minority students. District Court upheld the University of Michigan. |
| Grutter v. Bollinger | 1997 | Pending: US District Court Eastern District of Michigan | Complaint against University of Michigan Law School claiming the law school used different admissions standards for white and minority students. Case not yet decided. |
| Johnson v. University of Georgia<br><br>Bogrow & Beckenhauer v. University of Georgia | 2000 | US District Court Southern District of Georgia Savannah Division | The court held that the promotion of student body diversity in higher education is not a compelling interest sufficient to overcome Title VI's prohibition against racial discrimination. UGA failed to meaningfully show how racial diversity actually fosters educational benefits. This concept is, by nature, inherently amorphous and thus insufficiently compelling. This case was appealed by University of Georgia to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals |
| Smith v. University of Washington | 2000 | 9th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | Upheld the affirmative action admissions policy formally used by the University of Washington Law School. The court held that the legality of a race-conscious admissions policy should be decided on the principles of the 1978 Supreme Court ruling in *Bakke*. |
| **Student Aid** | | | |
| Podberesky v. Kirwin | 1994 | 4th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | Ruled against a University of Maryland scholarship program for Black undergraduates. The court found that the University failed to show continuing effects of past discrimination or that it needed the program to overcome minority under-representation and low graduation and retention rates. |
| **Faculty and Staff** | | | |
| Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education | 1986 | US Supreme Court | The Court applied strict scrutiny to a school board's affirmative action plan and overturned a race conscious layoff of a white teacher. |
| Taxman v. Board of Education of Township of Piscataway | 1997 | 3rd Circuit Federal Court of Appeals | Ruled that the board could not lawfully layoff a white teacher and retain a black teacher with equal seniority in order to promote faculty diversity. |

Because of contrasting federal district and appeals court decisions, there remains great uncertainty over the use of race/ethnic criteria by higher education institutions. Fundamental legal issues, as well as the scope of their applicability, are open to Supreme Court review. Concerning the latter point, some have argued that federal court decisions should apply to private institutions because of legal requirements arising from the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is also arguable whether the same legal criteria that are applied toward admissions decisions should be applied toward financial aid programs.

In the current state of flux, the Committee advocates following a prudent course of action guided by three key principles: 1) *Bakke* is still the law of the land; 2) the rationale used in *Bakke* which upholds the use of race/ethnic criteria to promote diversity in higher education validates a long-standing practice and goal of higher education which should be supported; and 3) care should be taken in making admissions and financial aid decisions to follow the principles articulated in *Bakke*.

**Articulating the Value of Diversity**

***"[U]niversities have failed to establish the fundamental link between diversity and their educational missions. If programs premised on the need for diversity are to survive in this legal and political climate, the educational value of these programs for all students must be fully and forcefully articulated."***

**Jonathan Alger**, *The Educational Value of Diversity*

How colleges and universities can best proceed to follow the *Bakke* principles in an unsettled legal climate is the subject of a forthcoming College Board manual written by former Department of Education lawyer, Arthur Coleman. Coleman makes the point that colleges and universities must be able to demonstrate the kind of educational benefits that are intended to be achieved from a diverse learning environment, as well as the actual effects that are obtained. He advises that it is no longer sufficient for an institution to broadly state its desire to be inclusive. The strict legal reasoning applied by federal courts has found some institutions in violation of the law because they could not produce evidence that showed how academic programs foster student learning through diversity. All courts have also ruled against admissions programs where institutions set aside a number of seats for a group of applicants since this approach stereotypes minority applicants based on their race or ethnicity.

While the Committee does not intend to provide legal advice to institutions through this report, in the current climate it does seem prudent for Illinois colleges and universities to ensure that they have evaluation processes that can both articulate and demonstrate their commitment to diversity. Diversity is used here in its broadest sense, to encompass areas where students are underrepresented, such as female enrollment in science and engineering. Fortunately, most Illinois institutions have excellent academic planning and review procedures. Institutions that have not already done so can achieve considerable progress by fully incorporating efforts to enhance diversity into core processes and procedures.

## Initiatives to Enhance Diversity

What more can and should Illinois higher education do to enhance diversity? As has been shown, a more aggressive approach to the issue of access should yield some progress.

Other more direct initiatives, however, should also be taken, especially in areas where diversity remains low and resistant to change. Because of legal and political challenges to existing processes, a few states have formulated new policies and processes to enhance diversity. This section considers these new policies and other alternative approaches.

## Admissions: Application of a Statewide Undergraduate Criterion

A percentage plan is a statewide higher education admissions policy based on a single measure of merit – a student's high school rank. It grants automatic admission to public higher education institutions to high school students who graduate at the top of their class. To date, three states have implemented such a policy – Texas, California, and Florida.

Texas implemented a percentage plan in the aftermath of the *Hopwood* decision. The state of Texas automatically grants admission to students graduating in the top ten percent of their class to *any* state institution, including flagships. California will grant admission to the top four percent and Florida to the top 20 percent. Unlike Texas, California and Florida only guarantee admission to *a* state institution, not necessarily a student's institution of choice. Although early indications from Florida show that minority enrollment is up by ten percent, it is too early to determine the long-term impact of such policies. Analysis needs to be conducted on several student and institutional factors including student enrollment, remediation rates, retention rates, and completion rates to gain a full understanding of success or failure. It will be a few years before such empirical evidence is available.

> *"The fundamental premise behind the plans – that automatic admission of high school students in the tops of their classes will result in racially diverse colleges – is contingent upon the continued segregation of our public school system."*
>
> Mary Frances Berry,
> Chair, US Commission on Civil Rights

Percentage plans would have the greatest diversity impact in states with highly segregated public school systems like Illinois. A 1994 report by Public Agenda indicated that Illinois ranked second behind the District of Columbia in the level of segregation of Black students in public schools. Illinois State Board of Education data for public high schools indicates that 50 percent of Black students and 21 percent of Hispanic students attend schools that are 90 to 100 percent minority. If numbers are the only consideration, a percentage plan in Illinois might provide a number of minority students equal to those currently enrolled. However, there are several associated issues of concern in adopting this approach. For example, highly segregated public schools tend to be less affluent and students in these schools are often exposed to a less rigorous curriculum of study than are students in more affluent school districts. Even if a percentage plan results in a high level of diversity, an inherent danger is that less academically prepared minority students may replace those who are better academically prepared.

Percentage plans may deny college admission to minority students who attend schools in more racially diverse and affluent areas and do not graduate at the top of their class, but are academically better prepared than some minority students because of exposure to a more rigorous curriculum. A contrary scenario is also likely. For example, most students from Chicago's Whitney Young Magnet High School (62 percent Black and Hispanic) and Lane

Technical High School (52 percent Black and Hispanic), recognized for their quality education, go to college. Because a percentage plan would guarantee admission to only the highest-ranked high school graduates, it would reduce the educational opportunities available to many well qualified minority students attending Chicago's magnet high schools.

Another issue of concern is who should make decisions about student admissions. The Committee believes such decisions have been and should continue to be an institutional prerogative guided, but not dictated, by state policy. A percentage plan policy drastically alters the admissions process by making decisions formulaic, ignoring important differences in student abilities and institutional missions and needs. This policy also centralizes the decision making process, requiring all institutions to follow the same statewide criteria. Such an approach is contrary to the philosophy behind the *Bakke* decision which acknowledges the benefits that institutions realize by being able to choose the mix of students that best meets their mission and goals.

Who Decides?

*"[A] university must have freedom to decide which students it will admit and which criteria it will use in its admissions decisions. This academic freedom is crucial in order for a school to fulfill its mission. At bottom, admissions officers must decide which set of applicants, considered individually and collectively, will take fullest advantage of what the college has to offer, contribute most to the educational process in college, and be most successful in using what they have learned for the benefit of the larger society."*

*Expert report of William G. Bowen, Gratz, et al. v. Bollinger et al.*

In conclusion, percentage plan strategies appear to violate their own logic from at least two perspectives. First, these plans purport to maintain high levels of diversity without the explicit use of race or ethnicity as a factor. Evidence shows, however, that the selection of the "percentage" is based on the number of minority students it will generate. Second, a strategy intended to broaden participation for minority students may in fact limit access for many well prepared minority students, a group this strategy is intended to help.

## Admissions: Broadening Merit Criteria

Higher education admissions should be based on merit and students' ability to successfully complete a program of study. What constitutes merit is determined by admissions criteria. In recent decades, many institutions of higher education have relied more heavily upon narrow definitions of merit determined by standardized college admissions test results, high school grade-point average, high school class rank, and other easily quantifiable measures. The movement away from a broad-based definition of merit has increased efficiency reducing the amount of time and resources spent by institutions in making admissions decisions. It also has had deleterious educational consequences.

There is much debate about standardized admissions tests as an indicator of merit. The President of the University of California, Richard Atkinson, has even proposed to discontinue use of the SAT in admissions decisions. The Committee believes the issue is not whether tests, like the SAT or ACT, should be used in admissions. Research has shown them to have validity in predicting early college success – and we support the use of such tests, especially

the Prairie State Exam. Rather, the issue is how standardized tests are used in the admissions process, that is, how much they are relied on and how much weight the scores are given.

Research indicates that standardized test scores are heavily influenced by a student's life circumstances. For example, students from more affluent families tend to score higher on standardized college admissions tests than do students from less affluent and poor families. These advantages are compounded by the socio-economic segregation that exists in some areas of the state. Many high school students do not achieve their full academic potential because of the lack of resources and a restricted curriculum in their local schools. Nevertheless, if given an opportunity, many of these students can and do succeed in college.

Over-reliance upon test scores can also limit an institution's ability to achieve greater race/ethnic diversity. Narrow conceptions of merit will exclude some minority students who might otherwise be successful in higher education. This sets the stage for implementation of special admissions programs that might run afoul of the principles set forth in *Bakke*.

"The movement away from a broad-based definition of merit has increased efficiency....It also has had deleterious educational consequences."

Broader conceptions of merit can expand the applicant pool and be inclusive, rather than exclusive, of more types of students. Merit, broadly conceived, includes factors in addition to standardized college admissions tests and even high school class rank. Foremost among such factors is enrollment and grades in core courses which research has shown to be especially important for college success. Other factors that could be considered in admissions include participation in after school and summer academic programs and involvement in special academic programs such as Advanced Placement. Student motivation also plays a critical role in college achievement. While there is no magic formula for assessing a person's true motivation, a careful examination of a student's academic performance should also consider the challenges and obstacles presented by family, neighborhood, and school circumstances.

The Committee strongly supports a more holistic approach to admissions decisions. Institutions should review their current admissions criteria and consider broadening the definition of merit they use. The Board of Higher Education shall work with Illinois colleges and universities in helping to identify and develop mechanisms that can be used to support more individualized review of student applications. The Board will also identify any additional costs that may be required to support institutional changes in admissions practices.

## Financial Aid

Colleges and universities have traditionally used financial aid as principal methods to enhance diversity. By providing financial aid to students with distinctive talents and abilities and with different backgrounds, a college is able to create a rich learning environment.

Illinois has a number of statewide financial aid programs that support student diversity. At the undergraduate level, the state's strong commitment to need-based financial

aid facilitates student choice and provides opportunities for many different kinds of students to attend Illinois colleges and universities. While race/ethnicity is not a factor in the distribution of aid, historically more than one third of all MAP grants awarded to students at public institutions and about one quarter of all MAP grants awarded to students at private institutions are given to minority students. At the graduate level, there is no need-based program. However, through the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program (ICEOP) and the Minority Graduate Student Incentive Program (IMGIP), the state provides graduate stipends to about 175 minority graduate students each year.

The Committee advocates more extensive, broad-based efforts to support diversity in Illinois higher education through targeted use of financial aid programs. Again, diversity is used in its broadest sense, consistent with the principles articulated in the *Bakke* case. Since diversity among many groups is lowest at the graduate level and since there is no graduate financial aid program comparable to MAP, the Committee proposes targeting most diversity aid to graduate/professional education.

To enhance diversity at the graduate level, the Committee would combine and expand IMGIP and ICEOP and make them one component of a new Diversity Grant Program, now to include women, especially in engineering, mathematics, and science programs, and disabled students. In contrast to MAP, the new Diversity Grants Program would be based on applications that would document student characteristics and abilities, as well as demonstrate how the award would help improve diversity within a particular program at the student's home institution. The Committee also advocates establishing a component of the Diversity Grants Program at the undergraduate level in fields such as information technology in which diversity is low both on campus and in the work force.

### Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Pre-collegiate Preparation

Poor student preparation, as described above, is the greatest single barrier to college participation. Many minority students attend schools in poor districts that do not offer the quality education often found in more affluent areas of the state. Many of these students are often at-risk because they lack proper academic preparation for college and motivation for further education. Pre-collegiate outreach seeks to help such students before their academic deficiencies become life crippling.

Illinois colleges and universities sponsor many initiatives that target poor areas and underrepresented students. Many business, community, religious, and not-for-profit organizations also have developed successful pre-collegiate interventions. Indeed, some programs such as the one operated by the "I Have A Dream Foundation" (see text box) have

**"I Have A Dream"**

**The *I Have A Dream Foundation* (IHAD) helps children from low-income areas through a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education. Students who remain in the program and go to college have their college costs paid for. Today there are 160 IHAD projects in 57 cities in 26 states serving more than 10,000 Dreamers. Illinois is home to five IHAD project locations – Chicago, East St. Louis, Elgin, Evanston, and North Chicago. The success of IHAD projects are phenomenal. For example, the Chicago I project showed a 69 percent graduation rate in a district where the drop-out rate was 60 percent.**

had a dramatic impact on the success of at-risk students and many students from these programs go to college.

Private non-profit programs work because of their intense personal commitment to the students that they serve. Such programs have something to offer that public institutions and agencies may find hard to duplicate but which these state entities can support and possibly help expand. For instance, could state financial aid programs be coordinated with IHAD to reduce the financial commitment required from an IHAD sponsor? Could public universities develop their counseling programs or internships in a way that would strengthen the capability of non-profit organizations to better meet student needs? The Committee believes that there are opportunities through public-private partnerships to better serve disadvantaged students. The Board of Higher Education should bring together public and private entities to identify ways to carry out such cooperation.

### Recruitment

Over the years, Illinois colleges and universities have expanded recruitment activities to advance campus diversity. Can more be done to extend the reach and effectiveness of these recruitment efforts? The Committee believes that the Prairie State Exam, a newly developed assessment of the State Board of Education, offers an opportunity for such improvement.

About two thirds of high school students now take the ACT, but fewer minority students than majority students participate. While there is no information on non-ACT participants in Illinois, the experience of other states indicates that there are many college-ready students in this untested pool. Fortunately, the recent Prairie State Exam initiative, which requires all high school juniors to take the ACT, will provide new information about minority students who are well prepared for college. The Committee advocates that Illinois colleges and universities should use all means at their disposal, including the Prairie State Exam, to intensify recruitment of underrepresented students.

## Summary

Student diversity is a fundamental goal or principle of higher education that provides all students with educational benefits during college and serves them well when they graduate and assume responsibilities as citizens and employees. Student diversity not only helps colleges and universities advance their educational mission, but it also ensures that diversity continues to act as a positive, and not a divisive, force within our state.

The importance of student diversity is recognized under existing law and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case. The principles of this case should be supported and closely adhered to by Illinois higher education even as we continue to seek other avenues to promote diversity. To achieve this aim, the Committee advocates using more broad-based definitions of merit in admissions decisions, increasing recruitment efforts by capitalizing upon the opportunities presented by the new Prairie State Exam, forming partnerships with private organizations that are successfully helping pre-collegiate students from disadvantaged communities attend college, and establishing a Diversity Grant Program that would increase representation in fields where diversity is lowest.

## CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSION: TWO COMPETING VISIONS

As the Committee looks forward into the first quarter of the 21st century two competing visions emerge. The first vision is bright and hopeful. It foresees a time when the increased demand of our population for a college education has been recognized and its special challenges met. In this new world, more high school students are better prepared for college than ever before. Because of this preparation, as well as the information and assistance that students receive as they begin college, more students are completing their academic programs and achieving their career goals. As a result, Illinois is more prosperous and productive.

In this not too distant time, providing access to a greater portion of our state population will enhance the diversity of our institutions. Our colleges and universities will offer a stimulating and challenging environment where no groups are given special rights but where the backgrounds and experiences of all students are recognized. In this setting, diversity within the student body will be valued and supported and, as a result, all graduates will be fully prepared to assume civic and job responsibilities.

The second vision is dark and more pessimistic. In this world, higher education has not adapted to meet new economic and social conditions. Even though the economy will demand workers with technical skills, the number of students graduating from college will vary little from previous eras. Colleges and universities and elementary/secondary schools will continue to follow separate tracks with students getting lost in transit.

Unlike past years when many students who did not go to college could enjoy successful careers, the dynamics and rewards of the economy in the second world will draw more students to college, whatever their level of preparation. Here, too many will languish and leave, unprepared to lead productive lives. Some students, of course, especially those advantaged by family income and education, will continue to do well. However, the collegiate settings in which they find themselves will be harsher, more competitive, more insulated from the wider world, and, ultimately, less satisfying and successful. In such an environment, diversity will not flourish.

It is not difficult to choose which of these two worlds we might wish to live in. It is also not difficult to choose which of these worlds would benefit the state of Illinois and its citizens. The recommendations in this report seek to start Illinois higher education on the path to enter that first world. To arrive at our destination will require additional resources, and a new way of doing business. The following recommendations establish priorities and policy directions, propose changes in existing educational practices and structures, and put forward new programs to meet emerging needs. In the last analysis, however, they are but a first step in a lengthy journey that will involve consultation among many parties and adaptation to changing circumstances.

## CHAPTER VI

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations seek to reduce barriers to access, provide the right kind of access, and prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse world. To communicate the nature and intent of these recommendations, the Committee organizes them around five policy goals.

**Policy Goal #1: Expand the Scope of Policies and Mechanisms that Address Access Needs**

*Improving Pre-collegiate Preparation and School to College Transition*

The Board of Higher Education will introduce legislation that requires all high school students to take the college core curriculum. To further improve pre-collegiate preparation, the Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the State Board of Education should work together to:

- Align high school curricula and graduation standards with higher education admissions requirements and learning expectations.
- Develop assessment and communication tools to inform students how well they are progressing in preparing for college.
- Create "college-like" courses for high school students that remedy academic deficiencies and model college level skills.
- Create an annual "Report on Readiness for College or Work" to inform the public about the academic skills of high school graduates and college freshmen. The report should provide indicators of college readiness of high school graduates, such as results from the Prairie State Examination and enrollment in pre-collegiate core courses, and indicators of academic achievement of students in their first year of college.

*Expanding Commitments to Off-Campus Instruction*

- In the development of technology-based instruction, public universities should place a high priority upon baccalaureate degree completion programs and programs that address the needs of diverse populations.
- The responsibilities of Illinois community colleges should be expanded to broaden access to computers and technology-based instruction and to provide information to local residents about educational opportunities at all degree levels.
- The Board of Higher Education shall undertake analysis and collect information about the types of technology-based instruction programs for which there exists the greatest statewide and regional need.
- The Illinois Century Network shall work with state agencies and Illinois colleges and universities to broaden access to computers and technology-based instruction.

*Providing the Right Kind of Access*

- The Board of Higher Education shall establish a Web-based Consumer Information System that promotes access as well as consumer protection. The system will provide information about institutional programs and services. It will help students with special needs, such as students with disabilities, adult students, students living in underserved

areas, minority students, and off-campus students. The Board will establish a council to provide on-going advice about the kind of information that should be included on the system.

- The Board of Higher Education and Illinois colleges and universities shall develop model programs that seek to reduce first-year attrition among types of students who have had lower rates of degree completion. Working with Illinois colleges and universities, the Board shall develop "principles of effectiveness" that describe practices that have proven effective in reducing first-year attrition among such student populations. The Board of Higher Education will use grant funds to develop these model projects and will disseminate these principles across the state via the Board's Annual Report on Underrepresented Groups and Web-based Consumer Information System.

*Extending the Reach of Student Financial Aid*

- The eligibility requirements of the Illinois Incentive for Access program should be expanded to fund students in the first year of college who have minimal financial resources.
- Eligibility requirements of the Monetary Award Program should be expanded to students registered less than half time.

**Policy Goal #2: More Fully Address the Access Needs of All Students**

*Students with Disabilities*

- The Board of Higher Education will introduce legislation requiring publishers of textbooks to make their products available in electronic format to Illinois institutions of higher education for the use of students with disabilities.
- Illinois colleges and universities should ensure that the technology-based courses that they offer are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities.
- The Board of Higher Education, working with Illinois colleges and universities, will convene a conference on how access and persistence of students with disabilities can be improved by new and emerging assistive technologies.
- The Board of Higher Education will incorporate information about students with disabilities into its Baccalaureate Follow-Up Survey.
- In conducting campus audits of physical barriers to accessibility, Illinois colleges and universities shall seek the involvement and advice of students and staff with disabilities.
- Illinois colleges and universities shall recruit staff and students with disabilities. Public colleges and universities shall periodically include in their annual reports on underrepresented groups information on these recruitment efforts, highlighting model programs and effective practices.

*Students with Limited-English Proficiency*

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board shall bring together educators from higher education institutions, secondary schools, and community-based organizations to consider how new technologies can best be used to strengthen the professional development of English as a Second Language instructors.

**Policy Goal #3: Evaluate and Demonstrate How Diversity Promotes Learning in Higher Education Programs**

- Each public college and university should assess the efforts and success of its courses and programs to promote diversity and should incorporate such assessments into ongoing program review and academic planning processes. Such assessments should measure the benefits and learning outcomes that result from participation in diverse learning environments, as well as indicate how improvements in instructional and support programs might further enhance such benefits.
- Each public college and university should periodically report to the Board of Higher Education on the benefits and learning outcomes of efforts to provide diversity in their higher education programs. The Board of Higher Education, through its annual report on the underrepresented groups, shall report to the Governor and General Assembly about these efforts, highlighting model programs and effective practices.

**Policy Goal #4: Strengthen Statewide Efforts to Support Institutional Diversity**

- The Board of Higher Education encourages public colleges and universities to use academic and personal factors in admissions decisions in addition to high school class rank and standardized test scores.
- The Board of Higher Education will work with Illinois colleges and universities identifying and developing mechanisms and procedures that can be used to support more individualized admissions review. This joint consultation will also identify costs that may be required to support changes in institutional admissions practices.
- The Board of Higher Education will introduce legislation requesting the establishment of a Diversity Grants program. The program will have a graduate component to promote diversity among minority students, students with disabilities, and female students in engineering, science, and computer science programs. A smaller undergraduate component will support diversity for students enrolled in fields in which diversity is low on campus and in the work force. Both components will be based on applications that will document student characteristics and abilities, as well as demonstrate how the award would help improve diversity within a particular program at the student's home institution.

**Policy Goal #5: Expand Outreach Efforts to Pre-collegiate Students to Promote Diversity**

- The Board of Higher Education and Illinois colleges and universities will meet with private organizations that have successfully increased the academic achievement and college-going rates of disadvantaged students for the purpose of identifying how Illinois higher education might best partner with and support their programs and activities. A grant program should be established to facilitate such public/private partnerships.
- Illinois colleges and universities should make extensive efforts to recruit minority students by consulting a wide variety of sources that provide information about minority student achievement, such as the Prairie State Examination of the State Board of Education.

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